

Dating Advice: Can An Open Relationship Ever Work?



By Lori Zaslow and Jennifer Zucher for [Project Soulmate](#) with contributing writers Elizabeth Hamilton and Julia Presten

Relationships, platonic and otherwise, provide us with something important and needed: love. The affection, care and intimacy that love gives is a beautiful part of life. But what happens when one partner wants to start seeing other people? Open relationships can be extremely difficult to handle and can ruin a perfectly good relationship if you're not careful. Check out NYC's top matchmakers and [relationship experts](#) Lori Zaslow and Jenn Zucher's [dating advice](#) on whether or not an open relationship is a good idea for you.

Dating advice on whether you should consider an open relationship.

1. Why an open relationship? When deciding whether or not you and your partner are going to pursue an open relationship, the first question you have to ask yourself is why you're both looking for one in the first place. Have the two of you been having [relationship problems](#)? Fighting often? Some people begin open relationships because they think that one person, no matter how amazing they are, will never be able to give them everything they're looking for. Ask yourself whether or not it's a problem specific to this relationship or one that's more long-lasting.

2. What about you? Are you the jealous type? A little self-conscious? Or are you more laid-back? If you've always been a bit jealous or self-conscious when it comes to love, an open relationship is probably not the best fit for you. Keep in mind that if your partner starts seeing someone else it might shake your self-esteem even if you've never had those feelings before. Be as honest with yourself as possible. You'll also need to consider how adding a third or fourth (even if you never seen or met them) person into your relationship will affect both you and your partner. Could you handle seeing them text heart emojis to someone else? Spending the night in someone else's arms? Even at their best, relationships offer love *and* stability. You'll need to ask yourself whether you can feel loved by your partner while they're also intimate with someone else.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: What To Do If Your Partner's Family Doesn't Like You](#)

3. Set ground rules and know your expectations. Will the two of you have a "don't ask, don't tell" policy? Is sex on the table? Is love on the table? When you talk with your partner,

you need to ask these questions. Make sure you set ground rules and have the same expectations for what an open relationship would mean. Would you go on dates with your *other* significant other? Or would you be hush-hush with the details? Establish some boundaries before diving into an additional relationship. If you and your partner aren't on the same page, both of you – plus whoever else you're bringing into the relationship – could end up really hurt.

4. Have an ongoing conversation. Is this one-sided? How does your partner feel about open relationships? What do they want out of it? As you continue with your first relationship, you should keep talking to your partner. Check in, see how they're feeling with everything going on. You and your partner are a team – team members have each others' backs. Be honest and tell your partner if you ever start feeling uncomfortable and need to change ground rules. If there's ever a point where you need to end the "open" part of your open relationship, it'll be easier to do so knowing that you've had an ongoing talk.

No matter what you and your partner decide to do, keep talking and listening to each other. Relationships are supposed to be fun! If you approach an open relationship with an open mind and a confident heart, it might work out. If it doesn't, remember you are loved by many different people – not just your boyfriend or girlfriend – who will support you no matter what happens.

For more advice on love and relationships from relationship experts, check out our [website](#).