

Can You Be 'Just Friends' After Dating?



By Matthew Sullivan

Many different writers and relationship experts, not to mention everyday people, have pondered the dilemma of whether or not two people can remain friends after they've dated. Clearly, this question has no easy answers. Whether or not a couple can remain friends after their exclusive relationship has ended depends on a host of different factors, especially the personalities of the individuals involved. In order to accurately answer this question, it's important to look at and consider the different scenarios that might lead to a friendship:

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1. Your relationship was very casual: Sometimes two people date fairly informally before coming to the mutual conclusion that a relationship simply isn't in the cards. In this scenario, a friendship is a distinct possibility. For example, Kylie Minogue and French actor Olivier Martinez were courting back in 2007. Their relationship did not have much time to mature and they decided to split, however to this day they remain good friends. Casual courtships like this can easily turn into a solid friendship as long as both parties agree that a continued dating relationship is not the best idea. It's always easy to still be friends when deep romantic feelings emotions have yet to develop between two people.

2. Your relationship was more serious: When relationships develop beyond the casual stage, a friendship becomes much less likely. Many people have attempted to befriend their exes, but it's rare that they have any long-term success. In many cases, this is because breakups in serious relationships are rarely, if ever, mutual. The idea of friendship serves as a consolation prize. The party that agrees is in the midst of being broken up with and eagerly agrees in hopes of hanging on and winning their lover back. When the two parties are operating on these different wavelengths, the new friendship rarely works.

3. Neither party was wounded: Of course, as with all things in life, there are always exceptions to that rule about serious relationships. Actors Bruce Willis and Demi Moore were married and had three daughters together, but their break up did not appear to be dramatic and they were further bonded in friendship by their responsibilities to their daughters. This made their separation one of the most amicable among celebrity couples. In fact, when Demi Moore later broke up with Ashton Kutcher, Bruce Willis was quite supportive of Moore. In the case of Willis and Moore and many similar situations, neither

party was wounded from the breakup, meaning there are few lingering thoughts to make a new relationship with the ex.

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4. You've taken your time: In order for a friendship to legitimately grow out of a romantic relationship, time is essential for both parties to heal and for the emotional connection to dissolve. A solid six months in which the former lovers do not speak is often necessary for the emotional wounds to heal and for each person to decide if a friendship would be helpful. After that period, the two parties can come together and attempt a friendship. However, even in that situation, you can never guarantee success.

Remember, none of these scenarios are guaranteed to work out in these ways. Even more importantly, there isn't one answer that applies in all scenarios. It's best to know yourself when figuring out whether or not to try.

Matthew is a freelance writer and lifestyle coach. He enjoys writing on various online lifestyle publications, including the DatingWebsite.com.