

Taylor Swift and Conor Kennedy: How Fast is Too Fast?



By Relationship &

Sex Talk, Jane Greer, PhD for GalTime.com

building a base for love

Superstar Taylor Swift and boyfriend Conor Kennedy hadn't been dating long when he took her to a family wedding in August, despite reported requests that she not go because some worried Taylor's presence would take away from the bride's attention.

That's a problem most of us don't have to worry about, but it does raise the question: When is it a good time to meet your new flame's family? And is it a good idea to attend a big family event early in a relationship?

A patient of mine was in this situation recently. She had been

dating someone for a few weeks, and was over the moon about him, when he asked her to his best friend's wedding. She was thrilled, to say the least, and read his desire to take her as a sign that he was really into her and wanted her to meet his inner circle. Not only was she flattered, but she attached great meaning and expectation to their blossoming relationship because of the invitation.

Hearing her enthusiasm and high hopes, I was concerned about the possibility that for her new boyfriend, this was more about the upcoming occasion – and not wanting to go solo – than it was about actually beginning a serious relationship with her.

That is not unusual, that you meet someone around the time of a big event and have it in mind during those first few weeks of dating. In other words, the new excitement and romance which for her was all about getting to know each other, may have been for him simply about having a great time at the wedding. Or, perhaps his intention was to get to know her better, but his sister didn't like her, or his best friend gave her the thumbs down. Whatever the case, it didn't go well for my patient. After the wedding, she never heard from him again.

Sometimes the timing can't be helped. You have been dating for a short time and his sister just happens to be getting married next week. Or it is her older brother's birthday bash and everyone will be there. On the one hand, it can feel very encouraging that your new partner seems to like you so much that they want to bring you to a big family party and meet the important people in their lives. On the other hand, you might be walking right into a judgment fest in which, if you haven't established your own strong connection yet, your newly significant other might be too easily swayed away from you should their family suggest you aren't the right match. Instead of gaining favor, you run the risk of getting the seal of disapproval.

Think of it as building a good fire. Sometimes the top takes off right away, burning high. But if there isn't a hot smoldering base, that fast fire can quickly fizzle out. Take the time to establish a foundation before opening yourself up to any possible criticism. If you are asked to that wedding or birthday celebration early on, you can politely decline, adding that you would love to go to the next occasion. That will give you a chance to build a solid relationship so when you do meet the family you are already an item, and your new partner can better withstand any negative comments that might come your way. And if, in fact, the motivation to pursue you stems from wanting a date for the event itself, you will have your answer before you got in too deep.

Taylor and Conor didn't choose this path, but jumped right in. She has met the family, attended big events, and even, sadly enough, visited the grave of Conor's mother who died recently. For him, obviously, it wasn't just about having a date to the wedding, but only time will tell if their foundation will be strong enough to sustain them.

What do you think...how fast is too fast to introduce someone to your family, bring them to a big event, move in, propose, etc?