

Can You Date Your Friend's Ex And Keep Your Friend?



By Jane Greer, Ph.D. for GalTime.com

Supermodel Naomi Campbell is one of the most well-known faces in the fashion industry and the creator of the model-search reality show *The Face*. It was on the show that Campbell met and began a mentorship with the aspiring model and former Miss Universe China, Luo Zilin. Luo was the runner up on the show and the last model standing on Naomi's "team." She has a long history of modeling successes around the world.

But this week it was reported that her contract with MIX Model Management NYC was abruptly terminated. The agency cited an "unacceptable work ethic" and "unprofessional conduct." The

firing comes just a few weeks after Luo was photographed on vacation with Russian billionaire Vladimir Doronin who happens to be Naomi's ex, leaving many to speculate that Naomi was somehow behind the firing. Naomi and Vladimir broke up earlier this year after dating since 2010.

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Naomi is known for her temper – she was charged with assault in 2006 for throwing a phone at her assistant– and rumors abound that it was she who made sure Luo was punished for liaising with her ex. This raises the question that many face: is it ever OK to date the former flame of a friend or mentor? And if that opportunity comes up, what is the best way to handle it?

This goes to the very core of friendship or mentoring – so much is freely given and exchanged in those relationships that the lines can become blurred as to what is realistic to expect to be mutual. In particular, when it comes to exes, it can be difficult to distinguish those boundaries and, as a result, they can get crossed. So in order to maintain your friendship or the respect and support of your mentor or mentee, there are a few things to keep in mind before going ahead.

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To begin with, break-ups are rarely clean. Oftentimes couples may break up for a short period but then get back together, or at least cling to the possibility that they might. In addition, one person may continue to care more than the other, leaving feelings open and dangling out there. If you think you're interested in a friend's ex, consider the nature of the break-up before you proceed. There are times when a relationship ends with no strings attached – perhaps your friend even feels guilty about breaking up and says that the person wasn't right for him or her, but thinks that you might

like them. That could be a green light that it is okay to go forward.

Whether that is the case or not, the only way to approach this without risking ruining your relationship is to be aware, open and honest. Also, before initiating a conversation about the possibility of dating your friend's or mentor's ex: first consider the timeline. If it was a very recent break-up, you might want to wait a little while not only to let things settle, but also to make sure it is a done deal. Once you are sure, check in with them to see how they would feel about your connecting up with that person. It isn't always an easy conversation to have, but it will let you know where they stand and, consequently, where you stand. If you keep this in mind, you will be able to preserve your old relationship in the event that you do start a new one.

What do you think? Is it EVER OK to date a friend's ex or is it safer to just stay away from that situation all together?