

My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by matt - 2009/11/01 08:29

My Mom passed away a little over two years ago and my father recently started dating. Though I am happy for him and want him to find companionship(he is in his late 60's) I worry that some of the women he is dating are taking advantage of my Dad. How can I express my concerns without my Father thinking I am being resentful or too protective. Any other advice to help me deal with my Dad's dating life would be greatly appreciated.

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Re:My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by krittie - 2009/11/01 11:16

I kind of know how you feel. My dad passed away 2 years ago and I always worry about my mom dating again. As much as we don't want to think that our parents will move on and find someone else, it's a fact of life. It's not like your dad is forgetting about your mom, this is part of the grieving process for him. I never wanted to see my mom with anyone else but one night I was over at her house and she was so sad and all alone. That's when it really hit me that she was missing him a lot more and that maybe she would need someone else in her life to experience the rest of her life.

I think it is awesome you are looking out for you dad and hope these women do not take advantage of him. I also think you need to talk to him about it. Find out what he knows about the women he is seeing and see where the women are in their lives. Some of their motives may be bad, but some of them could be in the same boat as your dad. I think it is important to give all of the women a chance and really find out why they want to be with your dad. You seem like a very smart guy and I do not doubt that you will be able to see the ones that are just using him and the ones that truly care for him. Be there for your dad because he will need your support. Be honest with him and be there for him when he needs you.

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Re:My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by 1shauna1 - 2009/11/01 15:14

It sounds like he is dating several women, so as long as he isn't getting serious with anyone, you probably don't have to worry about him being taken advantage of. I bet he is "old school", in that he believes a man should pay for dates, etc. The women he dates, being of the same age, probably believe that as well. If that's your concern, maybe talk to him about how nowadays, couples often rotate who pays, and he doesn't always have to pay for their dates. If you are uncomfortable hearing the details of the dates, just tell him nicely that you are happy he is enjoying life, but you don't need to hear the nitty gritty of it. He will understand that.

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Re:My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by MissyE543 - 2009/11/01 19:41

I am sorry for your loss and hope I can help you in this tough situation. I decided to ask my friend Nick since his mom died 16 years ago and went through a very similar situation. After hearing his story, I came up with a few tips that may be of help to you.

Nick's mom passed away when he was a young teenager. His dad started dating very soon after. One of these women was very bad for his dad. Even as young as Nick and his siblings were, they could see how cold and calculated she was in taking over the family. She wanted to control his dad in every aspect of his life.

Nick and his siblings waited a few years to express their concerns to their dad. They started out with the positives and told him that they wanted him to be happy and to have someone. They understood they would all be on their own at some point and did not want him to be lonely. They also expressed their negative feelings about her which eventually turned out to be true. Their dad flipped out and said they were attacking the woman. He could not grasp what his kids were saying to him and told him they were just kids and knew nothing about adult relationships. He said he did not want to hear anything else on the subject which left Nick and his siblings feeling very hurt, confused, and scared. They decided that they would not say anything else to him because they did not want to upset him anymore.

Nick's relationship with his dad got progressively worse as the years went on. Some of his siblings stopped talking to his dad but Nick still attempted to have a relationship with him. He always tried to understand what he was going through and how we was grieving and coping. Fast forward 15 years later and his dad is now divorced and now married to another woman.

Nick and his dad recently started speaking again, especially about what happened to their relationship ever since that conversation. Nick's dad realized he should have listened more intently to his kid's feelings, both positive and negative, and not been so stubborn and standoffish to the whole thing. Sadly there were no winners in the end as they both missed out on each other and that time is something you can never get back.

After hearing Nick's story, I realized that it is very important to talk to your dad and let him know all of your thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Go into the conversation with a clear mind and open heart. You should also listen to what your dad has to say and hear his side of the story. You and your dad are not always going to agree on everything. One thing to remember is to not miss out on each other's lives. Your mom would never want that.

Please realize that this woman may be similar to the woman in the story but there may also be women that are good for your dad. It is important to give them a chance and get to know them a little better.

The reason why Nick and his dad's relationship broke down was because the lines of communication were cut. The most important thing in this is that you and your dad keep those lines open.

It is important to understand that your dad may just want a companion. Everyone deals with things differently. Just remember no matter who he dates, your dad is not trying to replace your mom.

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Re:My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by catherinette - 2009/11/02 07:51

First off, I'm so sorry for your loss. That must have been awful to go through.

With regard to your dad dating, it's awful to think that some of the women out there might be trying to take advantage of him. What makes you think that that's the case? What behaviors are you seeing that leads you to believe that?

Am wondering if it could be that what you're seeing is actually indicating that these women have less than wholesome intentions, or if it could be that it might just be hard to see him moving on.

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Re:My Dad Is Dating and I cannot Deal

Posted by Singletude - 2009/11/02 13:01

I'm sorry to hear about your loss! No matter how much time passes, I know you can never really fill the special spot that a mom has in your life.

It can be hard to watch widowed parents dating again even when their dates are nice people. If you suspect they have ulterior motives, it must be ten times harder to stand by and say nothing.

The difficulty here is that your dad is an adult and ultimately responsible for his own decisions. He may or may not resent your advice even if given with the best intentions. To figure out how to approach the situation, you might take into account how your dad has reacted in the past when you've offered suggestions about other personal matters. Do you have a close relationship in which you both feel free to discuss sensitive subjects, or is he more aloof about matters of the heart? Is he an open-minded kind of father who values your opinion, or is he a "father knows best" type who goes his own way? When you have constructive criticism, does he listen and consider it, or does he immediately take offense?

If your past experience with him leads you to believe that he'll react well to a direct discussion, then just be open with him. Tell him that you're glad he's dating again and having fun but that you're wondering what he thinks about the women who (fill in the blank) because you've noticed that they (fill in the blank). Is that okay with him? Then see what he says. He might say he didn't notice and ask what you mean, in which case you'll be able to further clarify what's worrying you. Or he might say yes, he knows perfectly well, and he's fine with it. In that case, you may need to respect his choice to live his life as he wishes even if it's not the choice you'd make. A final possibility is that he might deny what's going on altogether. There's also not a lot you can do if this happens, but if you think this might be the outcome and have siblings or other relatives/family friends who know what's going on, you may want to have them with you for support when you broach the subject.

If you don't think you can have a direct discussion, you might try a more subtle route. For instance, you might tell him that you noticed some articles about Internet dating scams or dating pitfalls to watch out for or something similar and thought he might like to have a look at them since he's dating again. With this strategy, you wouldn't mention any of the women he's seeing specifically. Instead, you would present this as a general interest thing he might like to know about, more of a, "Guess what I saw on TV the other day? This news special about how crazy dating is these days, especially when you're older. They said (fill in the blank). Wow, right? Just thought I'd pass it on in case you run into anyone like that."

In the end, though, you'll have to accept whatever choices in love he makes. I agree completely with previous comments that you shouldn't let this become a divisive issue that separates you. If he's not receptive, let it go and just focus on being the best son you can be to your widowed dad.

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