

Dating Tips for Divorced Dads

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ, DIVORCE COACH



LET ME SUM THIS UP IN TWO WORDS, “NOT EASY.” GUYS, I know moms like to think they hold the crown for being a divorced parent, but we don’t, we’re just more vocal about it. Now I’m not talking about the uninvolved dad in this article. I’m talking about a very much involved dad with a difficult ex spouse who is working and juggling dating. Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you head back out into the dating world.

1. Letting your children dictate your dating life is a big mistake. Listen, most kids will be resistant to their dad dating for various reasons, but not to date because little Jimmy throws a tantrum as you walk out the door will land you in the World of Loneliness.
2. Guys, kids and women get attached. Be sure you have strong feelings for someone before you bring them into the family fold.
3. Spend time with your children without your new paramom. Kids need one-on-one time with you and even though you might think you are giving them attention when you all are together, kids see it differently.
4. It’s understandable that the heart wants what the heart wants and typically that is time with your lady friend, but tread lightly. If you have always taken your son to a basketball game and now you start taking her in his place, guess who is going to be hurt and not feel like a priority? If you want to take her, take her another night.
5. Be sensitive to the fact that the woman you’re dating has children also. Navigating that minefield can be exceedingly frustrating, but be patient and keep things in perspective.
6. Acknowledge that being a divorced dad you cannot be all things to all people. There will be times that you have to choose your priority. Be at peace with that.
7. There is nothing wrong in wanting to have time to yourself or with your friends. Take it. You need it.
8. In a marriage, it’s easy to lose yourself. Now that you are divorced, find the person you lost and be honest with your dates about who you are. Don’t be who you think she wants you to be.
9. I know being a divorced dad equates with having several balls up in the air at the same time and then throw dating into the mix and you’re looking for shortcuts to make life easier. Enter the world of texting. I believe texting has its benefits, but when you are newly dating someone, please don’t text “goodnight.” Pick up the phone.
10. Be romantic. Be spontaneous and be open to new things. Enjoy this second chance to love and be loved. Oh and guys, be a gentleman.
11. It’s amazing what opening a door will do for a woman.
12. It’s OK and at times necessary to share information about your ex, but an entire dinner date? I recognize that if you are newly divorced your ex can still be very much on your mind, but try to keep it to yourself. If you constantly feel the need to talk about her, it might be a sign you haven’t let go and you’re not emotionally ready to date.
13. Take stock of yourself. Do you need to get to the gym? Update your haircut or wardrobe? Expand your circle of friends and/or interests? Remember, you are not just a dad but a single guy with an exciting chapter ahead of you.

Debbie Martinez, MA is a certified, mindful life coach specializing in divorce (aka: heart-break coach). She professionally coaches clients on how to avoid the breakup backlash and live better, not bitter. As a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator trained in collaborative divorce, Debbie gives clients the tools they need to successfully untie the knot and stand strong in the wake of adversity. She brings her formal training and life experience into her coaching practice to empower and educate clients through their divorce journey and onto new beginnings. You can contact Debbie at debbie@thepowerofdivorcecoach.com.



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