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Conscious Dating Singles News

July 2006

Question for July: Meet the Children: When and How?

I am a 38-year-old divorced mother of two, with children aged 8 and 10 years old. I've been on my own for the last 3 years and am now ready to date. I've decided to attend various singles functions in town and at my church. I'm also going to investigate online dating. I really want to prepare myself as well as possible for this undertaking because it's all very new to me.

I'd like to know at what point it would be best to introduce my children (and vice versa) to someone I'm dating. I certainly don't want to introduce them to anyone until I know we have both agreed we want to pursue a relationship. When is the right time to do this? How should it be done? Do you have any suggestions for explaining this to my children? I would really love your help.

Sarah from Santa Cruz

Lois responds ...

Although you're wondering about the "how" and "when" part of introducing your children, you're very clear about what criteria needs to be in place for them to meet -- being on the same "relationship page" with your date. One way my clients have found it helpful to deal with this situation is to honor the uniqueness of each child. One child may feel soothed by metaphor and resonate with a story, while another may need an occasional reference to your "special friend." Other children are "psychic sponges" and know what's going on so they need a more direct approach.

While trying to determine the best solution, you might want to consider these questions:

- What do I want my children to come away with? What about my partner?
- What is the safest, most loving and nurturing way to do this?
- How does my body feel when I entertain the idea of introducing my friend to my children? Honor that.

I adore these three mantras. "You can't not know what you know," "You can't boss around the heart," and "The body doesn't lie."

Whatever choice you make, wait until you're comfortable and clear. Children really pick up where you're at and what you're feeling. A final suggestion is to reinforce your love and special connection with them by reassuring them these feelings will always be there. In any case, take into consideration the nature of the child and the answers to these questions. Through this process, you will find the right "how" and "when" answers for you.