



# A NEW *Plus One*

Starting a new relationship is not the first thing most exes think about, especially when they have grown children and possibly grandchildren.

As time goes by, many come to realize they have the rest of their lives ahead of them and it can be lonely without a companion. When you find someone you really like who becomes important to you, and people close to you start seeing the two of you out together, it's probably time to talk to your children. But how? It's important to take into consideration the ages and type of relationship you have with your children before you bring up the conversation. If they're possessive or have a tendency to be enmeshed, then finding out you're involved with someone new may create unanticipated chaos, jealousy and even outrage. There are no guarantees with love, so sharing

the details is not important, but introducing them is.

## TIPS FOR SHARING YOUR NEW "PLUS ONE"

Let go of guilt. You don't owe your children a lifetime of singleness.

Don't rush into a commitment. Grown children are by nature suspicious of the motives of anyone interested in their parent, so don't get defensive if they mention your age, but also don't let them shame you or insult your feelings.

The more financially dependent your grown children, the more intense they may react to your new interest. Knowing and understanding this beforehand and addressing it as a

separate issue is important.

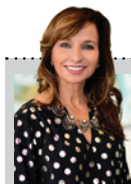
Don't share too much detail about your relationship. Children—no matter their age—don't want to think or hear about their parents having intimacy, so keep the details to yourself.

Keep your boundaries strong. Children have their lives and you have yours. For some, thinking about a parent with someone new might bring up past hurt or fear. Let them work it out and grow to accept the idea. Don't invade or bombard their boundaries by bringing your new interest around if they aren't invited.

A note of caution—although it's true you shouldn't allow your children to run your life, it's important that you don't avoid or deny comments from close

friends or children. Those who love you most are often able to see the truth behind the curtain of new love. The old adage of "blinded by love" holds true.

You've come a long way; prioritize what is most important for you. Reassure your children that you love them and nothing can change that. Consider your children's concerns, but don't be afraid to date and have a life again. It's OK for grown children to feel confused and upset with you as long as they talk to you with respect and consideration for your feelings. The happier they see you, and the more they see you being treated with respect and compassion, the more likely they'll be happy for both of you. ♡



**MARY JO RAPINI**

Mary Jo Rapini is the co-author of *Re-Coupling: a Couple's 4 Step Guide to Greater Intimacy and Better Sex*. A Houston-based psychotherapist specializing in sex and relationships in addition to being a speaker and TV personality. [maryjorapini.com](http://maryjorapini.com)