Dear Alice

By the time you respond to this, I probably will have made the decision... but I have to have someone else's point of view. I fell in love with this man about a year ago. We have known each other for five years but we didn't start "messing around" until last year. Last summer things started to get somewhat serious between us and he told me he was soon to be a father. At the time I told him that I was not willing to deal with that and that I didn't want to get serious.

Well, to make a long story short, before I knew it I was head over heels for him. The only problem we have ever had was dealing with his fatherhood. He is afraid to tell the mother of his child about me and it is eating me apart. I love him dearly but that coupled with the fact that I feel like such an outsider when it comes to the relationship that he has with her. I don't know if I am being immature or not, but I am hurt that he can't or won't tell her. HELP me please.

Signed, Not the mother

Answer

Dear Not the mother,

Trying to figure out your relationship is not immature at all! It is very mature to decide what is important to you and if you can get that from this relationship. Are you interested in being in a relationship with a person who has a child with someone else and all that that comes with? Family dynamics can be complicated and blended families can be even more complicated. That doesn't mean that it's impossible to be a part of a blended family or even that it's not worth it. It just means that it may be worth keeping the potential for future challenges in mind when deciding what you want to do.

Have you talked to your partner about your concerns regarding him being a father? Sometimes talking things out with your significant other can be a great way to problem solve difficult situations. Discussing things can also be good because it gives both people an opportunity to hear the other person's thoughts and feelings so that you know where you each stand on an issue. You may want to avoid trying to hash things out immediately after an incident or during a heated argument because it's often easier and more productive to have important conversations when neither person is angry. If you do choose to talk to your partner about the situation, you may want to pick mutually agreeable time for you two to talk. That
way, both of you will have had the opportunity to think about the issues before you actually talk about them. It seems like one of the main things you find difficult about this situation is that your boyfriend hasn’t told his child’s mom about you. This might be something especially worth discussing with him. Let him know how your relationship being kept secret makes you feel, and see if you can come up with ways to address the issue together.

In situations like this, professional couples counseling can be helpful in deciding how to move forward. Ultimately, if you decide (with or without counseling or discussion) that you do not wish to continue with the relationship, that is ok. Ending a relationship doesn’t mean that you don’t love him or that the relationship isn’t important to you. It just means that it is not what you want for your future.

Alice!

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Published date:
Mar 01, 1994

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