

## **Partners and Parents For Dinner**

### **Let The Holiday Headaches Begin!**

*By Frank Kermit, Relationships*



**Y**ou have been dating your new partner for a few weeks now, and your timeline has stumbled upon the holiday season. The holiday season means parties. Family parties, company parties, client-related parties, friends-traveling into town for dinner parties...should you bring your new relationship partner with you? Or should you go solo and wait until next year? The answer is: It Depends.

The criteria you need to consider before you bring your new partner to meet your friends, co-workers and especially your family at a function is if you are ready to go public with the nature of your relationship. That's it. If you are not prepared to introduce your partner as "your partner", you do not bring your partner along. And before the label-haters (those people that can not stand putting a label on their romantic exchanges) start gunning down my throat, consider this: It will be easier on you, your partner, and everyone that your partner will be introduced too.

If you are not going to introduce your partner as your actual partner, then do not bring him or her. The worst thing you can do is to bring your partner to a function and introduce your partner to everyone there as your "friend".

First of all, introducing your partner as "your friend" makes it awkward for everyone. You are not fooling anyone. People will make three assumptions: (1) you are dating but do not want to admit it because there is something wrong with your relationship, (2) one of you wants to date the other but the other is not interested enough, or (3) you are both just pathetic because you would rather hang out with a platonic friend instead of making the effort to actually find your own legitimate partner. Which would you prefer? Personally, I have been in all three situations, and I can tell you from experience that none of them make you feel good at the end of the night.

One of the stories I often hear during my coaching is about the person who brings a "friend" they are interested in to a function, like a work party, and end up having to bite their tongues when co-workers start to flirt, hit on and aggressively try to attract "the friend". After all, if you aren't willing to admit that you are more than "just friends" (or that you would want to be), then your "friend" is fair game. Do not put the focus of your affection into a potentially compromising social position.

If you are still at the point of having to introduce your partner as "your friend" at any functions, then do everyone a favor: Wait until next year, and bring your partner along to the future holiday functions if you are still together, and publically open as a couple.

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