

Ask Miriam...

Individuals and families in the community are faced with challenging issues and concerns regarding their social, emotional and psychological health. Through the cooperation of **The Jewish World**, Jewish Family Services will offer responses.

Q. Dear Miriam,

I have been widowed for two years. My marriage was a happy one and we raised our family of two children. They have married and have their own families now.

In the past six months I have been seeing a man and we are becoming very close.

The problem is that my children don't approve of the relationship.

I would like to see a future with all of us involved in family events.

What can I do about this situation?

Conflicted Mom

A. Dear Conflicted Mom,

There are a number of issues involved here.

First, your children may feel that you are being disloyal to their father by having another relationship. It is difficult for them to put themselves in your place since they are not living the reality of each day, but deal mainly with the memories.

Secondly, you do not need your children's approval to make positive choices in your life that increase your happiness and security.

I suggest that you and your children sit down and discuss what is going on. Perhaps you can help them sort out and separate their feelings about their father and your current relationship. Their reaction is not unusual and this will not be resolved in one conversation. You may want to seek professional help for guidance. However, don't put your life on hold during this time.

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Q. Dear Miriam,

My father died recently and I am dealing with both the loss and with anger at my siblings. It seems my dad's death brought to the surface our poor relationships with each other. We can't agree on anything about his estate or disposal of the household.

My mother had predeceased him so we need to do these things.

How do we get through this process with the least amount of contention?

Bereaved Son

A. Dear Bereaved Son,

Since you seem to understand the situation, perhaps you could appeal to your siblings to put aside some of the issues and lead discuss creating a willingness to compromise. You should also find some way to deal with your feelings so you can make good choices in the future. Get to a bereavement group, a support group, or talk individually with a counselor.

Readers, I suggest that you use this as a wake up call to look at your own situations. Death of a loved one, particularly a parent, is emotionally charged. Every parent and adult child should see it as their job to have a plan in place for the parent's death and what will follow.

Wills help in distribution of property, but often issues arise around the kind of funeral, burial arrangements, and disposal of the "less valuable" property.

This is a process that should go on over a period of time before the situation becomes urgent. You may even find that these discussions lead to resolution of some ongoing family issues.

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Miriam Adler, A.C.S.W., C.S.W., is assistant director of J.F.S. She answers most frequently asked questions. Please send questions to "Ask Miriam," c/o Jewish Family Services of NENY, 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY 12208 or e-mail madler@jfsneny.org or call 518-482-8856.