

# How to Talk About Your Past Romances With Your Partner

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If you feel uncomfortable talking about your romantic past with your partner, you have plenty of company. ***A recent study found that 38% of men and women avoided talking about past relationships while only 16% hesitated to discuss controversial topics like religion and politics.***

Would you like to share more information with your partner, but are unsure how to approach this sensitive topic?

Following these steps will enable you to feel more confident as you discuss your past romances and help ensure a positive experience.

**Take these steps ahead of time, before you have the discussion:**

- 1. Decide how much disclosure is right for you.** Some people prefer to leave the past in the past while others want to be able to talk about everything with one they love. Strike the balance that feels right for you.
- 2. Know your criteria for a partner.** For religious reasons or other factors, it may be essential to you that you're the only person your spouse has ever been involved with. If so, date people who fit that description to avoid future hard feelings.
- 3. Develop valid bases of self esteem.** *Feeling good about yourself reduces jealousy and possessiveness.*
  - Base your worth on your accomplishments and values instead of putting an unrealistic burden on your mate.

4. **Take a long term view.** Of course, we all have insecurities. *Sometimes it's worth taking a risk to open up so you and your spouse can grow closer* even if it's a struggle to talk about things you may have kept secret.
5. **Protect your physical health.** Whatever the nature of your relationship, protect the health of you and your partner. Muster up the courage to assess any risk factors and practice safer sex.

**Take these steps together with your partner:**

1. **Think before asking.** Figure out how much you actually want to know. Consider whether the information you request from your partner really matters or is likely to make you happier together.
2. **Go easy on the details.** *You can often give your loved one a rough outline rather than a minute by minute replay.*
  - Gauge their body language and comments to avoid too much information.
3. **Avoid comparisons.** Recognize that everyone is unique. Downplay your dalliance with a TV chef if your new love has trouble distinguishing between the rice cooker and the toaster.
4. **Pay attention to patterns.** *The greatest value in this whole exercise may be spotting areas in your past where you can make positive changes.* Talking things over with someone you are close to is an effective way to feel validated and motivated to move ahead.

5. **Time it right.** Neutral times and places can make sensitive subjects easier to address. Good opportunities may include long car trips or uneventful weekends.
6. **See the humor in the subject.** The world's top social scientists concede the illogic in decades of studies reporting that the average heterosexual man has more sex partners than his female counterpart. There is still social pressure for men to exaggerate and women to underestimate.
7. **Be accepting.** In most cases, the way you respond matters more than any magic number. Try to appreciate your partner's willingness to communicate openly rather than punishing them for stuff they did before you even met.
8. **Focus on the future.** If looking back helps you to gather more insights, put them to good use by making improvements in your future. That history could help you learn to make your current relationship a success.

It's up to you how much you want to talk about your previous relationships. If you decide to discuss more of your love life with your partner, ***use these strategies to process your feelings and demonstrate mutual respect and support.*** You can be at ease with your past and ready for your future together.