

## Dealing With Your Ex (Or Hers) - MTP462

Live from the mist-enshrouded mountaintop fortress that is X&Y Communications Headquarters, you're listening to the world-famous Mountaintop Podcast, and now, here's your host, Scott McKay. Hey, how's it going, everybody? This is your main man, Scott McKay. And this is Emily McKay.

And we're coming at you again with another episode of The Big Show, and today, Emily, we're going to talk about something that we've been meaning to talk about for a while. I don't know why it's never been covered before, maybe because it's kind of a touchy subject. Oh, yeah? What's that? We're going to talk about how to deal with your ex.

Ooh, that is a touchy subject. And here's a surprise, especially when you're in a relationship with someone else now. So do we talk about our exes? Well, you know, I don't think it's a good idea to bring up your ex if you don't have to.

Now, if the other person that you're now in a relationship with says, hey, what's up with that? What happened there? Why did you two break up? It depends on how far along we are in that relationship. If it's a first-time date, it might be a little too personal, too quick, too fast. Yeah.

I mean, I think it's fair on a first date or a second date to broach the subject, hey, why are you divorced? Why are you single? Because I think, you know, there may be valid reasons why someone is single. They may be crazy. They may be violent.

Anything like that. And especially for women trying to gauge their safety with a guy, I can completely understand it, even on a first date. But it is awkward conversation.

If it's a second or third date, that would be better. Yeah, fair enough. I mean, if you're on the first date, you just want to make sure you're having fun and that you even get along.

I mean, nowadays, that's a big enough hurdle to cross, isn't it? Well, I know. Especially if the divorce didn't go well or if the other person was just, you know, there's some embarrassing things that may have happened. It may be too personal because you may only go on this date once and never see them again.

And you don't want to spill your life and soul to someone you'll never see again and never really have a relationship. Yeah, especially if you're not really actually divorced yet. Ouch.

That's right. I didn't even think about that. You're right.

Yeah, this person and I, we just don't get along. We sleep in the same bed at night. But hey, I'm glad you're here and we're on this date.

Next! Next. Well, all right. So let's say you have gone through a couple of dates, we've resolved why we're single again or divorced.

I mean, some people get out of a long-term relationship and it feels like a divorce. Some people have just been single for a long time and haven't found the right one and that's okay. But specifically, when you do have an ex in your life, it can get awkward anytime that ex comes up.

Now, if you have children and dad or mom is still in their life, then if you're dating someone, there may be these exchanges where they pick up the kid on Saturday and give them back on Sunday, weekends, summers, et cetera. They're going to see their ex again sometimes. So I mean, in my mind, we have to get over it.

Right, because everyone's had a past and everybody's had other relationships. Just get into the details. I totally understand why you want to know why someone's divorced, why your relationship didn't work out, why you broke up, why you're not boyfriend and girlfriend anymore.

Were you the person who offended the relationship and caused the separation? Because that might be a red flag that this person may not be a great companion. Yeah, they might not be relationship ready at all. Exactly.

But then again, they may have been the victim of it. And it's nice to know that they will make a great companion. Or maybe they've realized what part they played in contributing towards the demise of the relationship and they've grown and matured from it.

That's a good sign. Yeah, I think that's a good sign. But what about if the person's heart was broken and they were jilted and they're just not over this person yet? Oh, yeah.

Well, that just reminds me that that could be where, you know, you might remind them of that person and they're constantly thinking that you remind them of these particular traits. Oh, men are comparing you to them all the time. Right.

That's hard to do. I really miss my ex-boyfriend because he used to do this nice thing for me and you don't do that. Or you just did something, a mannerism or whatever, that reminds me of him.

That's like a big dull moment. It's like just, you know, and it's awkward because you want them to shut up. And it's like, you know, I'm right here.

But they just can't help themselves because guess what? That other person is still at the forefront of their mind. But usually that's not the case. A lot of times most people don't get along with their exes.

They don't feel warm fuzzies towards their exes. Yeah, I think that's usually true. Otherwise they wouldn't have broken up.

I mean, and I say this with some trepidation, especially if you're out with someone really sharp and has everything going for them, they're probably the one who does most of the breaking up

in their life. I know by the time you and I met each other, we were both respectively doing most of the ending of relationships short or long term in our respective lives when we met each other. True.

We were. Right. And so there was no hard feelings there.

Right. If someone is bouncing in and out of relationships where they're constantly getting their heart broken, they're probably either really needy or really clingy or exhibiting signs of just not being well, whoever they're dating's future. In some way they're because of their erratic behavior or whatever.

Or maybe they have a bad choice in men. Yeah. Like a bad picker.

Their picker's broken, right? Yeah. So, you know, they're constantly getting their heart broken. That could mean, you know, you're next.

You're the next bad person they pick. I wonder if that would mean if I'm the next bad person they pick, maybe I'm just not the right person. You are a bad picked, not a bad picker.

I'm not sure which one's worse. Well, I mean, it's probably not your own fault. This person's just gravitating towards people they're going to be fundamentally incompatible with.

And, you know, either they're putting up a good front, they're not being completely honest, right? That they're presenting themselves to be something they're not. And when you find out that they're not who they represented themselves to be, well, they're gone. And voila, the pattern continues, their heart's broken again.

Right? Now, there's another thing that I was just reminded of. A lot of times we go on a date and we're really curious and we're asking the questions and we're trying to figure out how to ask the questions. But then there's the opposite problem.

When you meet someone, they won't shut up about their ex. Well, that's a situation where you're not going to have a second date. That person's got some learning to do.

I mean, we just did a masterclass a couple of nights ago from when this particular show is being released called Read the Room. Man, what a solid classic example of a read the room moment. You're on a first date and you're going on and on and on about your ex.

First, the person sitting across the table from you, their eyes glaze over. Second of all, they're looking for the waiter so they can find an escape hatch, you know, check please. Third, they're just going to look at you and glare and go, you know, please.

Can we stop? And they may even drop the hints. And if you go on and on, well, guess what? Read the room. Well, I think some of those relationships actually continue on for several months before someone gets fed up and sick and tired of it.

You mean someone could actually outlast several months of someone going on and on about their ex all the time? I think they can do that. They'd have to be mighty desperate. I don't know.

I mean, maybe they figured, well, you know, she's had a hard life or, you know, he was treated wrongly. I can understand this as a fresh wound. I can, you know, overlook that.

Well, it would just be an enabler at that point. Well, it happens, unfortunately. I know, it does, it does, doesn't it? Well, all right.

So I think we pretty much resolved here that we shouldn't go around talking about our exes pretending it's just social lubrication, like nice first date conversation. It's not. It's not.

You know, basically, if it's something that comes up on a first or second date, I wouldn't sweep it under the carpet because that says maybe it might be a red flag to the other person. I'm trying to hide something. Right.

And maybe you're not. But notwithstanding that, I once went out on a first date with a woman who wasn't really sure if she was single or not because the courts had kind of emancipated her, for lack of a better word, because they didn't know whether her husband was alive or dead. Wow.

As it turned out, he was in the cartel and just went missing. Disappeared. Yeah, right.

And she had been doing like drug runs with him and stuff. Oh, boy. Okay.

So at least now I know why you're single. You know, she reported and I decided. I decided there wouldn't be a second date, but, you know, that was kind of a rare situation.

But yeah, I mean, if it comes up on a first date or a second date or it's obviously awkwardly too early to discuss it, I would say keep it very cordial and very succinct. Here's what happened and why. What about you? I hope they don't go on for ages.

Right. Just keep it basic. Keep the facts.

Don't have to. You're not. You're not marrying this person today.

They don't deserve all the gory details. Well, you know, here we are. We're a little bit hypocritical because on our first date, we talked about our exes, but it was one of those short conversations.

Why are you single? Well, because my ex is schizophrenic and bipolar and it was like the Spider-Man meme. We started pointing at each other going, wow, you too? It was a pretty brief, concise conversation where we suddenly got it. We got each other.

We realized, hey, you know what? I have an understanding of you. Exactly. You and I are literally on the same page of the divorce decree.

Yeah. This is where knowing about other people's exes come in handy. Right.

Exactly. So I think we've covered this. Let's talk about the exes themselves.

Okay. All right. Let me throw this on the table to kind of get the party started.

Okay. You know, it may not be an exactly fun party. Not the kind of party you'd want to go to.

Not like the Black Eyed Peas party. Oh, yeah. Let's get it started.

Or, you know, it wouldn't be like pink either. I'm coming out, so you better get this party started. I would assume pink would be more fun at a party than either of our respective exes.

Oh, by a long shot. Yes. She's into motocross too, which is cool.

But anyway, enough about me. Three kinds of exes. I think there are three kinds of exes.

The good, bad, and the ugly? Well, ugly exes are pretty easy to dismiss because you've raised the bar, but I think that's worth talking about. Now, if you have interface with your ex and suddenly you have a trophy for a new boyfriend or a girlfriend, expect catty jealousy from the ugly old ex. Fun.

Yes. That is ugly in and of itself for everybody, regardless of whether your new beau or bae is hotter or not. It's awkward for them too.

That's a thing because hopefully we're, you know, improving upon things after someone's gone from our life. We want to go forward instead of backward, right? Right. Yeah.

We want advancement, not regression. Yeah, exactly. And I mean, that's not just limited to physical beauty, of course.

It could be how successful they are, how smart they are, how socially gifted they are, how nice they are. Well, it's only natural because if our exes go out with somebody, our first thought is, did they do better than us? We can't help it, can we? Right. It's human nature.

Right. It's only natural because if we see our exes with somebody, we want to know if that person's better than us in any way, shape or form. And we also want to know if they do stuff better than us.

So it's only natural also that if we are going with somebody, they're going to have those exact same feelings. Well, you know what the only real true antidote is for that situation? And I'm acknowledging 100%, by the way, that it's hard to avoid. Well, it's getting someone better for yourself.

Right. Exactly. Exactly.

I couldn't give a rat's hind parts what my ex is doing if I'm happier now than I was with her. I

was always happy when my ex was dating. Yeah.

You know, actually, get going. Get out there. Find someone.

Leave me alone. Exactly. Right.

Maybe you'll stop being obsessed with stuff that is so negative if you find something positive. That's right. I was rooting for my ex.

I wasn't rooting for whoever my ex ended up with, obviously, because I think they were going to be in trouble because she's crazy. But still, I was kind of hoping she'd move on. Yeah.

That would solve your problems. Exactly. At least at some level.

Right. All right. So three types of exes.

People are probably going to come at me with torches and pitchforks unless I get on with this. All right. First one.

Drum roll. All right. So you have three types of exes.

The first one is someone who's cordial and trying to get along with you, probably because you have kids together. All right. That's the first one.

We'll talk about them. I'm not going to keep everybody in suspense. All right.

Even though I'd probably keep everybody listening, I'm not going to do that to the audience. Here we go. The second one is an ex who is still enamored with you and would love to have you back.

Ooh. That's sticky. Oh, yeah.

And the third one is someone who just can't freaking stand you and wants you to die in a car fire. That's scary. Okay.

So they don't like you anymore. They're done with you. They're mad.

They're angry. They're just pissed off. Okay.

And the second one, you'll recall, was someone who was still kind of obsessed with you and wants you back and can't get over you. Correct. And the first one is someone who's like, hey, you know, we moved on, but I guess we have to kind of see each other sometime.

Which one do you want to cover first? First one. All right. Someone who's kind of neutral.

It's kind of like a hostage negotiation, the hostages being your poor children. Right. So you have this handoff, peaceful handoff, hopefully, on Friday night, Sunday night, you get back with them.

I think that's something that the new boyfriend or girlfriend, or, you know, wife or husband, has to understand is going to be the case. This is in the best interest of the kid. And as long as the person isn't a negative influence, potentially violent, or wrecking your life in some crazy underhanded way, and if they were, by the way, I'd put them under the category of vengeful, hateful people, you know.

So assuming that there's a cordial relationship between the exes, I think the last thing you want to be is jealous, first of all. I was just thinking about that. So if your current girlfriend or boyfriend is jealous of the ex, this would present a really bad situation, because no matter how cordial the two of you are, the current boyfriend or girlfriend is going to be jealous, and that's going to create its own troubles.

So you need someone who's not jealous and can understand that being cordial is really a good thing. You know, and this goes both ways. If you are the innocent bystander here, and the person you're dating is bitter or jealous of the ex who's trying to be neutral, that's a problem unto itself, isn't it? Exactly.

So when you're in a neutral relationship, let's say you're in a neutral relationship, you have a brand new girlfriend. So the neutral relationship is between you and your ex, like we were talking about. Correct.

Everything's copacetic. Everything's going great. You bring in a new girlfriend into the picture, and she's like, you still like your ex, don't you? Well, that's her problem if you don't.

Because every time you go to exchange the kids or have to do something that is cordial, you have to do business, you got to take care of matters. And she gets upset because she's feeling, you know, well, maybe he'll go back to her. Maybe she doesn't understand that people can be cordial.

They don't have to end a relationship on a bad, sour note. Oh, yeah. I mean, if you're in a relationship with someone who has a cordial relationship with their baby mama or baby daddy, and you're getting all jealous and saying, well, what did you two do together when you made that changeover with the kid? I want to ride along.

I want to be there and make sure nothing happens. That's your problem. That's your problem.

You need to look in the mirror. Those problems exist. Some people don't think you should be friends with your exes.

Well, no one's trying to be friends with your ex. But what about that? Can I be friends with my ex? Can I hang out with my ex? Can we be social together when I'm in a new relationship? I've seen it happen. Yes, but I think if you could be friends with your ex, you could actually make that relationship work.

Well, we had a situation that was weird one time where we made friends with someone and

they invited us over to their house and her ex was hanging out with them because he needed a place to stay for a while. Yeah. Remember that? Yeah.

He lived with them. I was like, what? I got a feeling that was more to that relationship. Yeah, me too.

That's probably a different podcast. We'll just chalk that one up as an anomaly. Exactly.

Because that was definitely a, yo, what the f situation. Maybe we don't want to be part of this unique situation. You know what? I probably need one of those sound mixers with all the sound effects.

Yes. Because one of them's got to be, yo, what the f, because I hear that all the time on TikTok. Right? You need it.

There's got to be a button you can press. Hey, dogs have those buttons. Really? Yeah.

Well, they have buttons that emulate dogs. Well, you can push and go. I got to go potty.

Open the door for me, please. Wow. Now we're getting way off track.

But that's the dog trainer you need. I think you need to host a podcast for people who want to train their dogs. How to go on a date with you.

Oh, yeah. Like an emotional support. Dating dog.

Dating dog. Ooh, bizop. You should go in that business.

You could take all of your expertise and make emotional support dating pets. Right? Something like that. This is my tarantula.

No more second dates for that guy. No. My emotional support piranha.

Right? Hanging around my neck. Dead now. Aw.

It's close to my heart. It's close to your heart. Exactly.

Now it's an ex. Yeah, right. There's a Monty Python skit about a parrot in there somewhere, I'm sure.

Okay, so you have a cordial relationship with this person. No jealousy is the bottom line. This is something that's got to happen.

It's a business deal. And everybody has to understand that. Kind of like your emotional support tarantulas.

Right. Bizop. Okay.

Now you have a person who's desperately trying to get back with you, and they're trying to chase you down and hook up with you again. And they're trying all these sneaky little ways to weasel their way back in your life. But you've moved on to someone else.

Well, I would hope so. Unless you're still doing things that would make your new boyfriend, girlfriend feel jealous. Now the way that would look- Well, that's dysfunctional.

Well, not really. No? If your ex is trying to get you back, and you're falling for the manipulation tactics, not on purpose, but you're trying to be a kind person, you're trying not to hurt their feelings, and sometimes you give in to certain demands that you shouldn't, and your current boyfriend's calling you out on it. Rightfully so.

Oh, rightfully so. Because you're being naive and you're being silly. Now, let's put something right out here in the open.

A lot of times, if there's a fresh breakup, those two do get back together again. So if you're the rebound relationship, you better prepare yourself like the rubber band man, right? Right. Because this person is susceptible to getting back into that relationship, even if they said they didn't want to or they didn't mean to, especially if it was a long relationship that they got out of.

Or an abusive one. Right. And they get dragged right back in.

They always seem to go back. Oh, yeah, absolutely. You nailed it.

And if you're the person trying to speak some truth to this situation, common sense- Yes, common sense. Then it's probably going to be all for naught because, see, you're not emotionally invested in this situation as the third wheel, all right? Especially when there's children involved. Well, that's another whole can of worms.

Let's cross that bridge in a second. You're going to be speaking from a purely logical perspective, and it's an emotional thing. They're going to get back with that person, even though they shouldn't, because their emotions got the best of them because they got manipulated.

And it's like, honey, I miss you. And the person was just really, really persistent and wouldn't let you go. Now, according to the books, that's not supposed to work.

You're supposed to give them the gift of missing you. But if you give someone the gift of missing you and they're already off with someone else, that's definitely not going to work. Right.

That's a whole different game. That's a different ballgame. Then we change the rules and we play it differently.

Right, exactly. But I ultimately think the best strategy is, look, if you found someone better and you've moved on, don't give that other person oxygen. Suck that air out of the room.

Don't answer their calls. Don't answer their texts. They will do tantalizing things like, hey, I thought of something or I found something that's yours and dot, dot, dot.

And leaving that open loop, knowing that the zygarnik effect is going to wreak havoc on your imagination. And it's just tantalizing to respond to them. Guess what? You still better not.

Don't open Pandora's box. That's exactly what it is. Ignore that person.

Just bite your tongue until it bleeds because you don't want something to come in between you and that new relationship, that new nascent relationship that you'd like to see blossom into something great. And you especially don't want that to be your ex who ruins it. Well, actually, it won't be the ex that ruins it.

It'd be yourself that ruined it. Well, ultimately. Because you have full control of your decisions.

Yeah. Yeah, that's exactly right. You can tell them, you know what? You're out of my life.

You're done. And leave it at that. This conversation's over.

Yeah. That's one of your favorite lines. Not up for discussion.

Yeah, they just don't read the room. If they're not going to give up, they take the Winston Churchill approach. They're never, ever, ever, ever going to give up.

Unfortunately, couples do get back together because of this type of manipulation. But I tell you what, if you don't talk to them, if you don't see them, especially if you're not in a situation like work or a certain social circle you're both a member of that you're ever going to see each other again anyway, move on. Now, what did you used to do? You used to have phone numbers.

Oh, yes. Saved in your phone. That was do not answer one, do not answer two, do not answer 46, do not answer 67.

Or sometimes they had names on it. I recognized the name and it would pop up. I'm like, oh, yeah, I'm not answering that.

That was someone I went out with, you know, two years ago or something. Like, nope. Well, what's implied there is you shouldn't delete people's numbers when you break up with them.

Right. That's a mistake. Because then, you know, you get this number and like, who the hell is this? Because who has people's numbers memorized anymore? That's why we have smartphones.

That's right. So you just answer like, oops, I shouldn't have answered that. Yep.

There's Pandora's box. Oh, my goodness. My smartphone has betrayed me.

Pandora's box is opened. Yes. Yeah.

That's a good word there. So the third kind of person is someone who just can't stand you. They have it in for you.

They're probably going to try to sabotage you. There's a little bit of obsession maybe. I mean, if it gets to be too much, you go to a judge and get a restraining order.

But this is really rough on the person you're newly dating, too. Because they don't want to see you harassed. They don't want to see you in danger.

Well, if it's a woman who's dating the guy who's enduring that type of situation, she doesn't want to be in danger. Her safety and security might be, you know, she may feel unsafe. Remember Kindergarten Cop? Yes.

That's right. That was the whole situation. Right.

The woman was like... Trying to get away from her ex. Exactly. Who's going to kill her or whoever she's dating.

And she moved to a completely different state and he found her anyway. And of course Arnold had to save her. That's right.

That was like the whole subplot of Kindergarten Cop. Yeah, I actually have coached at least two people who are in that situation. Yes.

They basically have put themselves on a self-imposed weird iteration of a witness protection program to keep the other person from finding them. Get the police involved in everything. Yeah.

Restraining orders. For sure. The whole nine yards.

Now listen, if there's potential violence there and this person is obsessed with the person you're now dating, that means they're going to be obsessed with you too. You're going to be caught in that crossfire. You're part of the problem, buddy.

So as much as it's probably not that person's at least direct fault or responsibility there in that situation. I mean, yeah, their picker was broken again. They underestimated whoever this person was and how violent they could be and how obsessed they could get.

Yeah, but they're probably a decent person and you'd love to go out with them and they're probably wonderful. But you've got to ask yourself, what's in it for me here? And if it's a bullet in the head, that's not a good trade-off. No, that's not advancing.

That's regression. Yeah, exactly. That's exactly true.

Well, this has been a fun conversation. I think this is one we've never had. Yeah, we've never had this conversation.

No. And we've had exes for years. I know.

I think it's kind of like we've sort of just repressed the need to have this conversation. But after 19 years together, it's time. I think we can handle it nowadays and I'm sure our audience can too.

Absolutely. We've even had our conversations about our exes when we were dating. But a lot of that was out of curiosity because we both have exes who are schizophrenic and so we wanted to learn a little bit rather than looking at it from a negative standpoint.

Yeah, and it was good for us to know that information and have it handy about our respective exes because we've had each other's back over the years. Oh, yes. With conflicts and legal problems and borderline personality disorder drama.

It was good to be two minds, two people keeping each other in check. One of us being the logical person to help rein in the other person's emotional frame of mind because it's their own ex. Exes know how to get to you sometimes.

Yeah, but you know what? When we were a united front, two of us versus their drama, I think even the lawyers and even our respective children knew that was a lost cause. Oh, yes. Yeah, it wasn't going to happen, Captain.

And now it's long behind us. Thank goodness. Everybody's over 18, at least in that picture.

I'm glad we have sane children. I know, right? And that we're sane and we actually like each other. Aw.

It's helpful. Nearly 20 years later. Yeah, we've known each other for 19.

The 20th anniversary is coming up. I know. Yeah.

Time's flying. Yeah, boy. Flies when you're having fun.

Exactly. All right, so I'd love to say we've enjoyed having this conversation. Oddly, it has been kind of cathartic and fun to talk about it, hasn't it? Oh, yes.

Yeah, absolutely. So I'll tell you what. If you're listening to this show on the X and Y on the fly feed, go to [www.scottandemily.com](http://www.scottandemily.com) front slash podcast and get all the goodies, including, coincidentally enough, a whole book on how to handle breakups when it's time for you to end a relationship with someone.

Hey, there's lots of books out there about how to deal with being broken up with. This is about what to do in order to get out of a relationship. If you've known someone for a while versus known them just briefly, if you actually think they're a good person and they really don't deserve this breakup, they're just not your future, versus if they've done something nasty to you and they deserve to be broken up with, all of that is covered.

And that's there for you at [www.scottandemily.com](http://www.scottandemily.com) front slash podcast. If you are a gentleman and you're listening to this particular show on the Mountaintop Podcast feed, go to [www.mountaintoppodcast.com](http://www.mountaintoppodcast.com), download the free book, Sticking Points Solved. What I've done is I've taken letters from men all over the world and answered them.

And once we ended up stitching the book together, just about every sticking point you could possibly think of, including this one probably, is dealt with in that book. That and more is there for you at [www.mountaintoppodcast.com](http://www.mountaintoppodcast.com). While you're there, please visit our three longtime sponsors, Jocko Willink's company, Origin in Maine, The Keyport, and also Hero Soap. And when you use the coupon code MOUNTAIN10, get an additional 10% off your order.

So that about does it for this show. It's been a good one. It has been fun.

Yeah. So until next time, this is Scott McKay. And this is Emily McKay.

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