

To the Future Man Dating My Wife:

The day I died was the most devastating day my wife has ever experienced. The pain of my loss took her on a journey that tore her apart and left her gasping for air. This is a new life she didn't ask for. Like the mythical phoenix, she emerged a stronger version of herself. She is now even more beautiful, compassionate, and resilient.

Do not feel like you are in competition with me. You need to remember that just because her love for me will never dim doesn't mean her capacity to love you is limited. She has an infinite capacity to love you with her whole heart and soul the way she loved me. I can promise you that to be loved by her in that way is pure heaven. However, you must be accepting of her to do that by allowing her to continue to love me.

Just know it is possible for her to love me with her whole heart and soul and to still have room to love you with her whole heart and soul. That is the magic of the capacity of the human heart. It has an infinite capacity to love. So, as you date my wife please remember that she will need to be true to her feelings for me even as she develops a new and amazing relationship with you. We are not in competition. I was her yesterday. You are her today and tomorrow. Read that again. YOU are her future, as I will only get to love her from heaven.

Here are some things that will help her to honor me and love you even more.

1. Allow her to keep some of my things in a special place. Allow her to take those things out on birthdays, anniversaries, and other special times to honor the place I held in her life.
2. Don't force her to get rid of things I bought for her. Let her decide what to do with the wedding ring, special jewelry, and other items of importance. Remember that just because she holds onto these items doesn't diminish the importance of the gifts you give her. She will cherish your gifts because of the unique and loving relationship you will have with her.
3. Give her space to grieve. Grieving is a process. She may need to be completely alone on the anniversary of the day of my death or the day of my funeral. She may need to celebrate my birthday. Don't try to erase the memories we shared or the significant role I played in her life. Give her the time to remember me.
4. Dating a widow is different than dating someone with an ex-. We had a loving relationship. You are dating the woman of my dreams, the love of my life. We had a great life together. You do not need to feel like you are competing with a ghost. I cannot come back.
5. Allow her to share how she is feeling. Listen to her and truly connect with her. Make time for each other. Your relationship with her will be different than the relationship I had with her. That is the way it should be.

You get the benefit of a beautiful woman who knows how to love someone, how to build a life together, and how to endure unimaginable pain and come through it a new and stronger human being.

So, please be careful with my wife's heart. It has already been through so much. She is truly an amazing woman. Any man who has the opportunity to love her is a truly blessed man.