THREE IS A CROWD

Dear Jil,

I just don't get it. I hear it often but I didn't know you subscribe to the notion too. You mean a guy asks you out on a date and you invite your girlfriend along? I don't understand that. Now, I do understand a mini girls' outing to which a guy is invited; but that's clear to all the parties. In this instance however, the guy had no idea you were bringing along your friend. He came to pick you and found two women ready!

The first challenge with this is that the guy's budget is blown. He budgeted for two, not three. Besides, the whole thing is so awkward. Whatever happened to privacy? How's the guy going to be free? If the idea is for your friend to help you assess the guy, you can be sure she's going to come up with false reading. The guy won't be free so whatever your friend is supposed to be gauging is not the real person. You run into the paradox of Heisenberg uncertainty principle. It's the indeterminacy principle. You cannot measure the position and velocity of an object at the same time. That's Heisenberg uncertainty principle. The moment you inject your friend into a dating scenario, you set up yourself for false reading. The guy will be very conscious of what he says, doubly conscious of how he lifts his cutlery, doubly courteous... In other words, you'll never get a true and real picture of the guy with your friend present on your first date.
There are easier ways to get an assessment of the guy. You're taking the obvious and police woman approach. If it's a casual date, your friend can just “happen” to pass by, you know, “drop by” your table for three minutes. You could invite him to a friend’s party and your friends systematically engage him in conversation. You're a woman, I’m sure you can figure something out. But don’t invite your friend along on a first date. Men are more sophisticated about these things. They casually pass by to assess physical parameters, especially if the date is hot! The guy himself just wants third party validation of the beauty of his date. Which is really not an assessment but some form of egotistic thing. He wants his friend to comment on the babe's beauty. He wants his friend to feel “jealous.” The babe's looks will now be the topic of conversation at the next boys' get-together. They'll rib him good naturedly no end, talk about how lucky he is... That's mostly why guys do these things. Though some guys carry it too far, relying on their friend for heavy duty assessment. Again, that is riddled with contradiction. No one can know what you really want in a spouse except you. Only you can know. There are secret desires of the heart. They're locked in secret compartments biology hasn’t discovered. And there are desires of the heart that are not so secret but can’t be digitally converted into words. And the longings of the heart can be hard to articulate. When it comes to the desires of the heart language can be so analogue! It's why a boy and a girl can connect at a party over the distance of a room without any vocalisation of intent. There's invitation and acceptance over the long distance of the room. We speak in vocal and non-vocal languages. The heart sends out pulses very much like Bluetooth. If the other person is switched on to the right wavelength, there’ll be connectivity. No wonder Solomon said, one of life's mysteries is how a boy and a
girl can somehow connect via Bluetooth. Okay, those are not his exact words but you get the gist - love is a mystery. I'm just saying you ruin that Bluetooth connectivity the moment you introduce interference with your friend on a first date. When it comes to dating, two is a company, three is a political rally. Don't invite your friend along.

Besides, inviting your friend on your first date sends the wrong message to the guy. The way the guy will read it is, you don't trust me. In the first place, if you don't trust a guy you shouldn't be on a date with him. You run a risk. If trust is not the issue however, and your friend is a mere social blanket, you ruin the date. The guy is going to go home unfulfilled. He's just not going to be satisfied. There'll be words left unsaid on the table, alphabets unstrung, packed away by the waiter along with the dishes. And you better trust that friend you invited along, that she won't take a fancy to him. These things happen. Before you know it you're the third party. You become the invited guest at your own party. If he's a real catch and your friend has no character, you may lose him to her. You invited her along. Dates are private events at which CVs are exchanged, possibilities examined, character calibrated, outlook assessed. After the date, you can go and give a report to your friends, give them your assessment and they can all chime in. On a second date when he comes to pick you up, your friends can "just" happen to be in your house... And while you go touch up, they can strike him up in conversation...you know... Guys understand that. They understand they're being analysed. The guy may be a bit nervous but he'll understand. Not easy to have several pairs of eyes on you analysing every bit of you, eyes rolling, heads nodding imperceptibly. He'll of course discuss your friends with you on the way
to the date, the one he likes, the one he considers quirky etc. That’s an understandable scenario. But guys can’t understand third party on a date scenario. You might as well bring your mum.

How would you like it if a guy brings his own friend on a first date with you? And you had no idea his friend was tagging along. You get to his car and you see this guy at the back seat waving at you. He’s grinning like a Cheshire cat, butting into your conversation... Who are you really on a date with? You can always alter the dynamics so you feel comfortable on a first date. You don’t need third parties. You can choose the venue. But don’t send him the wrong message that there’ll be three people in the relationship. By the way your friend won’t reciprocate your gesture. She’s not going to invite you along on her date. You can be sure. The shoe never fits when you switch it to the other foot.

If you’re not impressed after the first date then don’t go out on a second date. No one can force you. Don’t ever forget that who you date (or marry) will always be your moral responsibility.

Your mentor, LA

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