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How much should you share with your partner?



Oct 28, 2011 6:00 AM by Jessica Padykula
Posted in Love & Sex / Marriage & Relationships
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Pros and cons of privacy

According to a recent survey conducted by computer security firm Norton, more couples are sharing passwords for things like Facebook and email. This might sound like a good idea, but it's a decision that's also causing problems. 20 percent of those surveyed admitted to looking at their partner's email account or logging into their Facebook account without telling them. 15 percent said they ended up having a fight with their partner based on what they saw. Sharing in a relationship is a must, but how much is too much?

Expert relationship advice

We turned to April Masini, dating and relationship expert behind the AskApril.com advice column and author of four books on dating, including *Think & Date Like A Man*, to give us her take on how much is too much when it comes to sharing with your partner.

Why people snoop

For some people, the opportunity to read their partner's email or check out who has been sending them Facebook messages is too tempting to pass up. Masini explains that there are three main reasons for this urge to snoop.

They're suspicious

Some people will get a feeling early on in the relationship -- it's usually a discomfort that they push away because the person they're dating seems almost too good to be true. So they snoop to see if there are any skeletons hiding in this person's closet.

They want to know more -- sooner

Sometimes people snoop because they want to know more about their partner than they're asking and they don't want to wait for the relationship to progress, so they rush things by digging deep on their own, rather than getting to know each other together.

They're simply curious

Masini says this isn't the same thing as purposefully snooping because you're intentionally looking to know more about your partner sooner. Here you're not looking for anything specific -- you're more aimlessly browsing because you like him and want to know more about him.

About 20 percent of the relationship queries Masini gets from readers on the relationship advice forum of her website have to do with the fallout from shared internet and phone passwords or accounts left open -- and the results are not good. "Always, in these cases, the suspicions are confirmed and it's worse than the person had thought," she says. "The usual problems that people find are infidelity, a predilection with porn or an ex-girlfriend who isn't quite as ex as was promised."

The bottom line

"Don't share passwords,

Masini's relationship advice is simple. Don't share passwords -- especially early in a relationship. "Your lover, boyfriend and/or husband shouldn't be all things to you, and vice versa," she says. "A little privacy is a good thing." But it's all about finding a balance. Lying and keeping secrets that will hurt someone are never a good idea, but sharing everything can lead to problems, so it's important to choose someone to date who is compatible and willing to put the effort in to make the relationship work. Says Masini: "Lots of men and women try not to do the work and then resort to shortcuts, like snooping, because they haven't asked, paid attention or faced their fears."

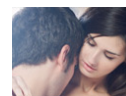
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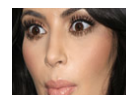
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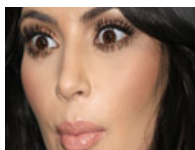
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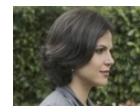
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