

Not Getting Along with Your SO's Family

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No relationship is perfect and sometimes it's the 'other family' that makes things difficult. Whether it's the over-protective mom, snitching little sibling, or the scary older brother who doesn't think you're good enough, not getting along with your other half's family is tough.

The little ones may be won over with candy, the older brother may be won over with respect but the parents are trickier. Sometimes the whole extended family, including that great aunt who lives halfway across the world, will catch a whiff of your relationship and may be against it for some reason.

You might think the girl's parents are usually overprotective, impossible-to-impress monsters while the guy's parents are more "chill," but you really shouldn't stereotype. I've seen men's parents freak out about their possibly-maybe-future daughter-in-laws for no good reason. The moms tend to do this more than the dads (okay, maybe it's alright to stereotype here). This doesn't

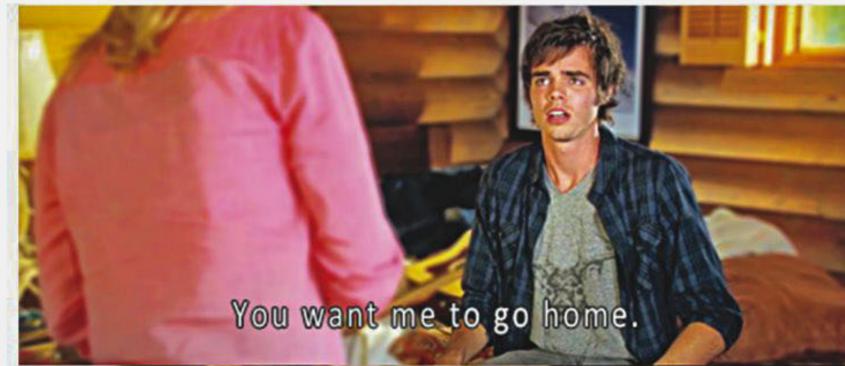
mean your boyfriend's mom will definitely be a monster-in-law or even if you get off on the wrong foot that she'll never warm up to you. Remember, the parents are just doing their job.

Love at first sight just may exist for you and your partner but not necessarily their family. There's usually this period of denial where the mom has to come to terms with the fact that her little baby is actually all grown up (kind of) and dating someone. So it's harder if you're their first. This is why first impressions are important, if you're being invited over to their place for a formal introduction - be polite, try not to be nervous and just be yourself. Dress in a way you think the parents will approve of, because your clothes are at the top of the list of what will be analysed, your home district is there too but you can't really change that. Be prepared to answer questions about your education and future ambitions. "I haven't figured it out yet" is never a good answer, something my SO learned the hard way.

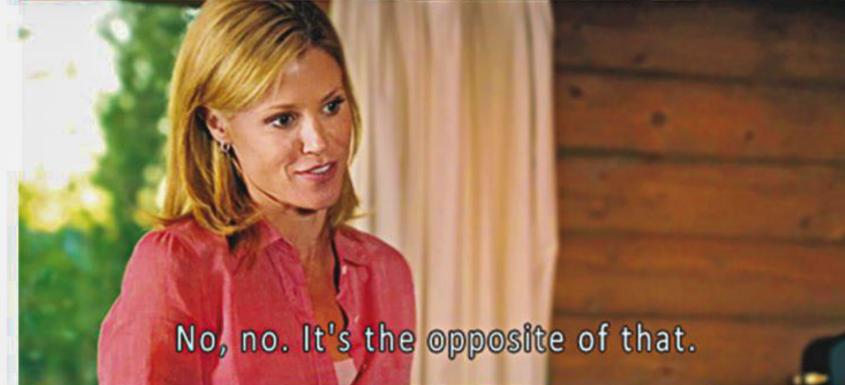
If you sense disapproval from the 'other family' know that you're not the only one

suffering. Your SO is probably constantly convincing their family why you're perfect while simultaneously worrying about how you're taking all of it. Let him/her know that this won't scare you off and you're determined to win them over or at least try to do so. Avoid things that the family disapproves of - being clingy, or staying out very late with your guy/girl are obvious no-nos. Basically, don't be a jerk because the family "hating/not liking you" is often because they don't know you yet and are just being cautious. Show them you're not the monster they think you are. Your SO chose you and they should respect his/her choice eventually. Don't badmouth the family, especially not to your SO, it never helps. If it's a certain occurrence or misunderstanding that is causing the rift, attempt to clear it out, otherwise the reservations may last for years to come.

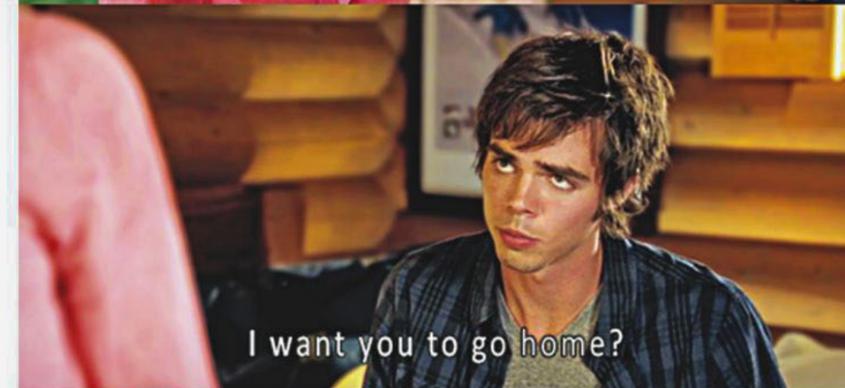
This is just another obstacle in your relationship and with your patience and your SO's support, they just may become a second family to look forward to.



You want me to go home.



No, no. It's the opposite of that.



I want you to go home?



Cruising solo at a wedding

SAMIN SABAH ISLAM

Nobody likes being the stray cat at a wedding who only takes selfies, since they're a stranger to everybody but perhaps the happy couple. However, with the mere thought of kacchi and unlimited free coffee, we eventually give in.

TURN IT INTO A SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

These weddings are a good time to brush up your communication skills and experiment with pickup lines. Wedding are swarming with beautiful eligible *patris* all clad in their best sarees and all the makeup they own. Take your pick on a cake faced sister of the bride and let your creativity soar. "Are you wearing a saree? Because you will be saree if you don't go out with me", or perhaps, "In that lahenga, you put the 'desi' in 'desirable'" Even if she curses your 14 gushti and walks away, she'll never find you again, since you're basically a ghost, and you can move on to the rest of the 200 sisters in the bride and groom's extended families. Make sure not to

hit on the same person twice, they tend to look identical in matching outfits and foundation-caked faces. Beware of their high heels and the glass of borhani they're holding.

RESPOND TO THE KACCHI'S CALLING

Who really cares about making the bride and groom feel important by attending their wedding? They have a room full of 5000 people for that. You're here for the kacchi. Since kacchi is the sole purpose of making an appearance, make sure to devour it as much as you can. Go for two, three or even four batches of dinner. Nobody knows you, nobody cares. Nobody frowns upon your bhuri bulging out of that suit. Find a different crowd every time and pick different tables. Just be aware of the waiter identifying you as the cause of the shortage of roast.

BECOME AN URBAN LEGEND

Since you did make an appearance at the wedding, why not leave behind memories for people to ponder upon later. Photobomb as many aunty group pictures and the teenager duckface selfies as you can. Gently

walk by as a random couple does the Titanic pose in front of the decorations. This way when they're watching wedding pictures, they'll all grow bald spots trying to figure out who you are. Even years from now, you'll be remembered as the enigmatic man no one knows, inexplicably appearing in every single picture. Who wouldn't want to turn into an urban legend?

Why let all your efforts of dressing up go to waste? Find one of those photographers and click away a couple hundred potential Instagram pictures.

CARRY A PORTABLE PHONE CHARGER

Nobody really cares where you are and what you're doing. So these weddings are a good time to catch up on your favorite TV shows and binge watch "Prison Break" perhaps. Find a good corner, by one of those rotating fans and let your phone screen consume your attention completely.

Samin Sabah Islam is on a quest to find the perfect diet while simultaneously drooling over pizza. Throw her some tips at sabahsamin11@gmail.com