

He Forgot My Birthday – What Should I Do? – 5 Relationship Experts Share Their Best Tips + Insights

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Follow the below steps



The epidemic of social media notifications and reminders may not be enough for your partner to remember your Birthday. And unfortunately, this unintended mistake occurs more often than not in dating and relationships. The best way to approach your partner on such a significant and potentially fragile topic is this:

The Set Up:

Effective communication encompasses many layers. First and foremost, your tone of voice and the way you engage in and confront the topic is vital.

Taking a deep breath, reminding yourself this was a mistake, and intentionally confronting the conversation in a non-accusatory way allows for a mutually safe space. You may want to sit them down and begin the conversation like this:

“Hey, I’m not sure if you knew, but my Birthday was the other day.”

I Statements:

“I felt _____ not hearing from you. I feel important when my Birthday is celebrated.”
Allow your partner the space to apologize, sympathize, and understand where you’re coming from. If this was important to you, they may make it up to you in a new way!

Forgiveness:

You and your significant other are human beings. You both will inevitably make mistakes throughout the development of your relationship. Mistakes and confrontation are terms I would classify under the umbrella of “words that lead to conflict.”

Conflict, in the *right* way, is healthy.

It allows both partners to communicate their feelings, needs, wants, and goals for each other, their partnership, and themselves.

The way in which the conflict / resolution dynamic is facilitated drives partners towards or away from one another.

My goal for my clients is that it draws them *towards*. It brings them *closer together* because they feel like their partner is *open, understanding, and willing*.

Challenge yourself to effectively communicate your feelings and understand where your partner was coming from as well.

For next time:

Radically accept what has happened. The past cannot be changed.

If forgetfulness is a recurring theme in your relationship: engage in *that* discussion using the “Set Up” and “I Statement” rules from above.

If this was a one time “slip of the mind:” choose to forgive and choose to move on. And above all, process.

Take the time to process how the conversation felt to you.

- Were you heard?
- Did you feel understood?
- Is there room for growth and improvement in the future?

Effective communication and conflict resolution are an ongoing practice.

Continue to validate and remind yourself that perfect interactions do not exist, but human interactions do.

Jennifer L. Coren, M.Ed. – www.nvisionyou.com/jennifer-coren

Don't use your birthday as a test for the relationship and ask yourself the below questions



In my daily life, I try to first give people the benefit of the doubt.

So let's try that, what was going on in his life at the time? But let's be honest. Your birthday isn't about him; it's about you.

A birthday is personal to the individual and should be celebrated in the individual's manner, assuming it's safe, healthy, and realistic.

Don't use your birthday as a test for the relationship.

Set expectations for the day and make sure the date is effectively communicated.

It is not unheard of for women to think and say, "He should know when it is" or "If he loved me, he would remember." The woman in me says, "Yes!" "Exactly!".

The clinical side of me, which is often my voice of reason, says

- Did you communicate how you wanted to spend your birthday?
- Did you share if your birthday is important to you and how you typically celebrate?
- Is it known that you don't expect him to be a mind reader and communicate your wishes effectively for the day?
- Have you asked him how he would like to spend his birthday? Or did you go all out and have a huge celebration because that's what you want for your birthday and you hope that he will follow suit?

If you think about it, you have been celebrating your birthday, potentially decades before you two have started dating or being in a relationship. You have had much more time to remember what day a year it is.

We can reframe this as it is not a barometer of how much someone feels about the other.

It can be a barometer of how well you communicate and make your own needs and wants to be known effectively.

If you do 100% your part and communicate appropriately, make your wishes known clearly and concisely, and he still forgets, well then, it might be time to take a closer look at whether or not this is the relationship for you.

Lori D'Elia, MA, LMFT, CPC – www.deliafamilysolutions.com

If the man you are dating is generally wonderful, but not good in this area, cut him some slack



Are you disappointed that he forgot your birthday?

Birthdays are one of the most emotionally charged special occasions that one can have, and it is understandable that you would want him to remember it and to celebrate you.

While some people are very good at remembering birthdays, others are not.

If the man you are dating is generally wonderful, but not good in this area, cut him some slack.

If he has a lot of positive qualities, focus on what he brings to your life and all of the benefits of the relationship.

As your birthday is approaching, remind him of the occasion, and tell him what you want to do for your birthday instead of expecting him to remember or to read your mind.

In these times, most of us live very busy, complicated, and distracted lives. We are multitasking at a rate like never before, and simply have more information than we can process.

Many people are on overload, and struggle with simplifying life in order to do what they need to do from day to day.

Just because your boyfriend forgot your birthday does not mean that he doesn't love you.

Try to look for the ways that he does show his love, instead of expecting him to fit your mold and show you love in the ways that you expect.

Once you have made a suggested plan for your birthday, it is very reasonable to expect him to keep the plan if he agreed to it.

If he is unable to do that, there may be bigger problems in the relationship.

Sometimes people use birthdays as a way to send a message, as special occasions are highly emotionally charged, and can bring underlying issues to the surface.

Empower yourself by taking charge of your own birthday.

Plan something you will enjoy, and make sure that your birthday is special. If you make it special for yourself, and don't depend on anyone else to do that for you, you can't go wrong.

The only things that we have control over in this life are our own attitudes and actions.

Have a positive attitude, be proactive, and make a decision that you are going to enjoy your birthday. Even when people come and go, you can always count on yourself!

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Learn to communicate effectively - be direct and ask for what you want



If you're like me, birthdays are a big event!

I remember how special my birthdays were with my family when I was younger. The parties, pretty dresses and especially the gifts! But men are quite different from us, and indeed are still from Mars!

Many things men find important we women just don't care about!

Quite a few men see their birthdays as "just another day" so it's not so surprising that they would forget our birthdays. It doesn't mean they don't love or cherish us, it's simply that their brains are not wired the same as ours.

So, what can we do about this?

Effective communication is letting people know what we want.

Frequently I see couples that don't use direct communication and they are often left feeling hurt or disappointed, because their mate couldn't "read their mind."

Effective communication skills teach us that being direct and asking for what we want is the best way to cope with this type of situation.

For example, a direct statement could be "I was really hurt when you didn't remember my birthday". Notice that sentence starts with "I".

Statements that begin with "you" like, "You didn't remember my birthday. You just don't care about me" are not helpful. When we start a sentence with "you" we are usually blaming the other person and not offering a solution such as, "How can I help you remember my birthday this year?"

Another pitfall in communication is using *should* statements.

For example, the thought, “You *should* have remembered my birthday” is an example of a distorted thought, according to the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

CBT is considered one of the most effective types of therapy in helping decrease feelings of anxiety and depression.

Many people with depression and anxiety use *should* statements when describing themselves and their life situations.

This type of faulty thinking typically surfaces in phrases that include the words “*should*,” “*ought*,” or “*must*.”

These statements are used by the negative thinker as a way to take on a pessimistic view of their life. People with panic disorder often think with *should* statements when thinking about their symptoms, which can lead to increased anxiety and avoidance behaviors.

By learning effective communication strategies and understanding our distorted thoughts, we can find ways to solve this issue and improve our relationships.

Margot Escott, MSW, LCSW – www.margotescott.com

Learn to communicate your needs in a non-defensive way



When special occasions like birthdays are overlooked by your partner, it can make one feel hurt, neglected, less than or not enough.

Unspoken expectations we have for our partner can foster sadness, anger and resentment.

There are several factors to consider before letting this event cause an end to the relationship; however, all factors end with the need to develop communication that can foster affection, appreciation and trust within your relationship.

Some factors include the length of time you two have been together, the ways in which you communicate with each other and the strength of your emotional connection.

If the relationship is new, you may have not had the opportunity to convey that important days of the year are meaningful to you.

Your partner may also have been experiencing uncertainty about what you need or want in the relationship. Your partner may have been worried that you would think they were overdoing it. Take this as an opportunity to emotionally connect by turning toward them, instead of away.

Relationship experts Drs. John and Julie Gottman emphasize the importance of communicating needs in a non-defensive way.

Let them know how important celebrating your birthday is to you.

It is important to non-defensively communicate your feelings using “I feel” statements to avoid attacking their character.

For example: “I feel disappointed that we didn’t celebrate my birthday because they mean a lot to me.”

Maybe you could then tell each other about your most memorable birthdays as a way to emotionally connect. Let them make it up to you by celebrating together the following weekend.

If your relationship has been established, then there may be deeper underlying communication issues in the relationship.

Often, underlying conflicts can become perpetual issues if not addressed. That is why it is so important for couples to nurture their connection by intentionally communicating.

We often feel like the other person should “just know” what we’re thinking, but we have not actually communicated our feelings and needs, which can lead to further hurt.

For example: Clara is on her way home from work and thinks about a new restaurant that just opened. She thinks, “Oh, I should ask Greg if he wants to go.”

Clara may then start having thoughts like “No, he’s not going to want to. He never wants to do anything anymore. He just wants to play on his phone or watch TV.”

Clara has essentially created a conversation where she asked Greg to spend time with her and Greg rejected her. Clara’s feelings are hurt and her negative sentiment towards Greg kicks into high gear. The issue with this scenario is that Clara and Greg never communicated. Not even once.

No doubt that hurt feelings will occur when one person in the relationship is feeling neglected.

Which is why it is so important to communicate with each other so we can come to understand the reasons behind each other’s actions and behaviors.

Cultivating an environment of openness can help couples establish true trust in each other and help protect their relationship from future stressors.

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