

Family Council

Ellen L. - She compares men to her late husband.
Greta J. - I can't help it - he was so wonderful.

Ellen L. - My sister is a widow in her early 50s. She has a married son and daughter and is living by herself.

Greta's husband has been dead for five years and I tell her it is high time she started looking around for another man. She is healthy and good looking and there is no reason why she should spend the rest of her life alone.

I've told Greta to join some organizations to meet people. She joins and then gives up after a couple of weeks. Occasionally she has gone out with a man, but she always compares him to her late husband. I feel this is a big mistake but I can't convince her.

Greta J. - I know that it's not the right thing to do, but I can't help making comparisons. My husband was such a wonderful man - so handsome, generous and kind. There couldn't be another like him.

When I visit these clubs my sister recommends, I am always amazed and upset at the number of women in my situation. All they are interested in is men - and there just aren't enough men our age to go around.

I really would like to meet a nice, companionable man, but it's easier said than done - especially for a fussy woman.

The Council: Unfortunately, Greta is in a poor frame of mind at this time to meet a companionable man and form a desirable match.

She appears to have fallen into a pattern of self-pity and anger with the world at her lonely situation.

When Greta sings the praises of her former husband, it is not purely to honor him, but a way of detracting from some other man. Comparisons of this sort are ugly and unreasonable. Greta is really calling on some unknown force to view her loss and unhappy fate. This blinds her to any good qualities the new man may have - and he undoubtedly has them.

When Greta enters an organization to meet people, she bears a chip on her shoulder. She does not go in with the idea of being helpful and companionable to others. She wants to take something from the group and is hurt and frightened when she realizes that it is not going to be handed to her on a silver platter. Other people in the organization have needs too. Greta is appalled at the sight of the other women with the same idea she has. She takes a very harsh view of them, but a very kindly, pitying one of herself.

Underneath, Greta is frightened at her situation and has taken refuge in coddling herself. But this will never bring her a fuller life. When she is ready to make a contribution to others, she will lose her fears and her loneliness at once. The man with whom she would like to share the remainder of her life may suddenly appear without her looking.

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