I don't want to sexile my new roommate

Alice,

My girlfriend and I both go to the same college and have been sleeping together for a while now, which has been easy because she has a room of her own. However, because of the way university housing worked out for next year, both of us are going to be living in doubles with roommates. We would like to continue sleeping together, but I realize that having a roommate could make this difficult. Should I approach my future roommate about the situation, and if so how should I go about doing so?

Thanks,
Sleepless in a double

Answer

Dear Sleepless in a double,

Across college campuses each semester, students are cast from their residence hall rooms in search of alternate sleep space by roomies who just want the closeness of being with their partners together privately, or who're busy gettin' busy. Based on what you've written, your principles seem in check, as indicated by your desire not to make your as-of-yet unknown roommate one of the countless "sexiled." To help you form a more perfect union with your girlfriend, while at the same time ensuring domestic tranquility with your roommate, here are some guidelines that could be represented in every Roommate's Bill of Rights:

**Right to privacy.** Everyone needs time away from his or her roommate to study, meditate, contemplate, clip his or her toenails, have sex by one’s self or with another person, and/or hang out. For example, the two of you can learn about each other’s usual routines and desires. Then both of you can begin negotiating. Agree upon a specified number of time(s) [e.g., blocks of time and/or overnight stays (if your roommate or you can find another place to sleep, that is)] each week when each of you can expect to have the room without the presence of the other. Some people make and keep to a schedule. Of course, there may be unexpected or unplanned need for private time in the room for you or your roommate. In these situations, perhaps you two can agree on a code or sign on the door to let the other know not to enter until a specified, reasonable time that's noted somewhere on the door, such as a message board or a note taped to the door. For example, years ago, if a man needed privacy, he'd hang his tie (or a sock) on the outside doorknob as a signal to his roommate.
Right to equal treatment. A right to privacy does not include the right to have another person stay over every night and/or expect your roommate to vacate whenever you want quiet time, or private time with your girlfriend. Your new roommate expects and is paying for a double; it’s not appropriate for you and your girlfriend to make it a triple, especially without his/her consent. If you log the occasional overnight (with your roommate’s permission), it’s reasonable to expect that you will return the favor and give your roomie equal time, at his/her request.

Right to free(quent) speech. A mutual understanding about roommate rights and responsibilities is something that evolves over time and takes ongoing discussions. Start the dialogue shortly after you meet by talking about what considerations you’d like from your roommate and what concessions you are willing to make in return: regarding all roommate matters, talking and listening carefully. This can include degrees of acceptable messiness; food purchase, preparation, and/or storage; renting or buying items for the room (e.g., fan, refrigerator); volume of music; study habits; naptime, etc. Once you have expressed these, and listened to your roommate’s considerations and concessions, the two of you can come to some workable resolutions together. Odds are your roomie will have some special requests, too (such as having the bed by the window or hanging Hieronymus Bosch prints on the walls). Clearly, the more you’re willing to give, the more you’re likely to get. If you start off by demanding that your girlfriend be allowed immediate and unlimited conjugal privileges, you could have your roommate heading for the hills (or more likely, to the RA and/or Housing Office).

You can also prepare for this by talking with your girlfriend about these upcoming changes. If you’re used to sleeping together every night, how do you think the new living situation will affect your relationship? What parts will be difficult or challenging? Are there any benefits that you see from sleeping apart more regularly? Are there other times and/or places when you can count on being alone together? You can each think about ways in which both of you can create additional time to be with one another. Perhaps you can plan to take a trip together over a break or for a long weekend.

If, after careful consideration and conversation, you and your girlfriend decide that you need to be sleeping together every or even most nights, perhaps another single is available. If not, then it might be time to look at pooling your resources and getting a place together off campus that will allow you unlimited and uninterrupted pillow time.

Alice!

Category:
Relationships [2]
Roommate Rumblings [3]

Related questions

No privacy to masturbate [4]
Roommate with B.O.? [5]
Roommate masturbates every night [6]
Privacy policy in Columbia residence halls? [7]

Published date:
Jul 11, 2003
Last reviewed on: