Tell my ex I'm pregnant by him?  [1]

Dear Alice,

I wonder if you can help me. I went out with a guy for four weeks and I lost my virginity to him. I really did think that he was special. As we both have our final examinations fast approaching, he said that he no longer wanted to see me anymore. I can harden myself to that fact, but I have just recently discovered that I am pregnant by him and this complicates the issue tremendously for the following reasons: 1. No money, no job yet. 2. No fondness for kids. 3. I don't want him to find out as he will assume that I got pregnant simply to "trap" him.

On top of that, I see him daily on campus and I am almost so close to telling him as a way of hurting him (he has a new woman now). Does pregnancy entail madness? I am really very confused. Do I tell him? I am not sure if I have any feelings other than hatred for him now.

Yours,
Feeling used, abused, and swollen

Answer

Dear Feeling used, abused, and swollen,

All of your feelings are very normal and realistic. You've gone through some significant life events in the past few weeks. Having sex for the first time, ending a serious relationship, and finding out you're pregnant? those aren't small potatoes. The good news is that whether you decide to tell your ex and how you choose to move forward with the pregnancy (there are several options) are up to solely you. The not so great news: these types of decisions aren't always easy or clear-cut. Taking some time to consider how you feel about your options and reaching out to those close to you will likely help you determine what course of action is right for you.

It sounds like your relationship with your ex did not end on the best terms, so it's no wonder that you feel conflicted about whether to tell him about your pregnancy. To help you decide if and when you want to let him know, it might be helpful to reflect on your own feelings about the pregnancy and his potential reactions. For example, do you want his input about how to move forward with your pregnancy, or do you want to make up your own mind about termination, adoption, or parenting? Do you think he would want to know that you're pregnant, no matter the outcome, or would he prefer to stay in the dark? Taking into account both of your feelings may help you decide how much information to disclose. You may decide that your pregnancy is a personal issue and that you don't want to share with your ex? and that's
completely fine. Perhaps you imagine that telling him will leave both of you worse off and that it's better to keep your distance.

After pondering a bit, you may feel ready to tell him about your pregnancy. As you mentioned, it's possible that he will think you got pregnant on purpose as a means to keep your relationship going. Alternatively, he may surprise you by feeling happy, worried, or disinterested. There's no way to predict how he will react, but playing out different scenarios may help you prepare to disclose your news. What would be the best possible reaction from your ex? The worst? The most likely? Next, think about how you'd like to share the news with him. Do you want to meet in-person and get his feedback, or would you feel more comfortable sharing the news over a phone call or in a letter? When you communicate, you may want to explain how you want him to be involved with the pregnancy. For example, you might want to ask him to visit a health clinic with you to learn more about pregnancy options. On the other hand, you may want to tell him that you want space and don't expect him to be involved.

Whether or not you tell your ex that you're pregnant, consider talking to a trusted advisor (such as a friend, family member, or clergy) first. S/he may help you put what you're dealing with in perspective, so that you can weigh your options about whom to tell and how to move forward with your pregnancy. For more information about all your pregnancy options, take a look at Signs of early pregnancy and abortion info [2] in the Go Ask Alice! Sexual and Reproductive Health [3] archive.

There's likely professionals at your school who can help you through this decision-making process as well. You may consider making an appointment at the student health services office to speak with a health care provider, a health promotion professional, or a mental health professional? any one of these folks can be of assistance. Off-campus, Planned Parenthood [4] is a great resource for anyone who wants information about pregnancy options including abortion, adoption, and parenting.

Best of luck to you,

Alice!

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