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Singles

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Happiness -- maybe it's not 'out there'

By Alisa Ruby



Alisa Ruby

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It all started with the phone call from my Jewish mother in the Philadelphia suburbs about five years ago: "My friend's son is moving to L.A. I think he has an on-again-off-again girlfriend. But, he's cute and nice. Anyway, he's going to call you for coffee." Innocent enough, or so I thought. Then, as the hours flew by and the age of 28 approached from around the corner, a cold sweat bathed my East Coast family. My 24-year-old first cousin announced her engagement to a nice lawyer from George Washington University.

Here I was across the country, no family, in grad school, living on loans, virtually dateless and in emotional recovery from a Beverly Hills player who thought marriage proposals were a game.

We were entering the danger zone, ladies and gentleman.

It was time to call in the big guns. The yentas held a conference, and mission "marry my Jewish daughter before age 30" began. My cousin's friend, the pediatrician, was going to call; my dad paid for me to go wine tasting in Malibu; and my Pilates teacher knew a great single Jewish tow-truck driver.

That was around the time I had a nervous breakdown. I knew I didn't need any help or handouts. I was a smart, attractive, independent woman, and I knew I could find my true love online in a week if I were really serious about it. I posted a profile.

The concept that even Frankenstein got married would often dance through my sleepless head after each grueling online date or night out at a bar. When the 5-foot-tall doctor who had posted a picture of his 6-foot-tall brother asked me to split the bill for coffee, I knew it was time to take a break. Why was there so much pressure? Thirty is just a number. Who really cares? Madonna had kids in her 40s, and look at Demi Moore.

My friends and therapist told me it was "them," not me. There was nothing wrong with me. I just needed to get out there. That was when it dawned on me, after a yoga class, that maybe "out there" was really just a reflection of what was "in here." Maybe my frenetic coffee shop drive-bys, obsessively long elliptical workouts by my gym's basketball court and late-night strolls down the produce aisle weren't going to help me find what I was searching for "out there."

That was when something miraculous happened.

Nope. I'm not going to tell some Pollyanna story about how I stopped looking and then found my soul mate at the gas station. The truth is simple. I gave up searching outside myself and committed to my passion.

It was like I had some sort of biblical experience. I was on the plane returning to Los Angeles when it hit me. I knew exactly what I had to do. I was just a couple classes shy of my master's degree in psychology and had been counseling individuals and couples in a local Jewish agency for about a year.

I had been on more than 200 first dates in Los Angeles.

I'd learned exactly what I was not looking for.

My experience skimming through online profiles helped me master the art and science of weeding out Mr. Wrong with one questionable sentence or phone message. I helped a bunch of my guy friends write profiles and watched as they single-handedly, consistently met girls and got engaged.

All my friends already had been calling me for relationship advice every day since high school. With my background in psychology and the positive growth I saw from working with my clients, I realized that I had what it took to help singles out there save their Jewish mothers from the schpilkes that kept mine up at night. I focused on helping other singles in my psychotherapy practice.

Over the years I have helped young, shy guys find their inner chutzpah, those with poor self-images gain the self confidence to write delete-proof profiles, and I realized that so many of us just want to find the same thing, but our own fear and self-

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doubt makes us question the ones who see our true inner beauty. As I have helped my clients get past their emotional blocks, I have seen them find what they want. It was like clockwork.

I began to wake up each morning like a woman in love.

That was when the words my grandmother always spoke came true. Yup. This one annoying doctor who kept calling finally met me for coffee one morning. My grandmother said I'd find him when I was not looking. I couldn't stand this guy over the phone, and I had little to no faith in online matchmaking. But something magical happened that day as our morning coffee turned into a ride up the coast and a lovely dinner in Malibu.

I was skeptical when he told me at the end of the night that he had a feeling we would be spending a lot of time together. Yet, somehow we have been talking every day since. And the love I sought from outside for so long, grew and grew as my commitment to my own success and joy filled up any emptiness or lacking.

Yes, I found my soul mate when I fell in love with my own life - although it happened several months after turning 30.

The moral of my story can best be summed up in my yoga revelation. Stop looking "out there" for the life you want. The happiness you seek is already "in here."

Live passionately while you are single and life will have a funny way of delivering your heart's desire - when your heart is already full.

[Alisa Ruby](#) is a psychotherapist, a part-time school counselor at Malibu High School and a freelance writer.

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