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## Columnists

### Dating Tips For Single Moms

by Alisa Ruby, M.A.

OK single moms, grab a red pen and your calendar. On Sunday May 13, 2007, Mother's Day, write the following words, "Breakfast with kids, Dinner with a date". Now that I have your attention, you may be asking me where to find this so-called date or saying, "What's wrong with being single?" If you are happily single, more power to you. You are our hero.

But, for many single moms, and there are approximately 10 million in the U.S., dating can be beyond difficult, whether you are recently separated or have been alone for years. Making the decision to dip your toe into the dating pool can be quite anxiety provoking and also exciting for anyone. But, for a mom, it can be additionally stressful, considering your responsibility of protecting your children from all the weirdos and creeps out there.

Although children in a single parent family can feel threatened, abandoned, or disappointed when their parent begins to date again, often as they grow, they will certainly want their parent to be happy and with someone great. The stakes are higher

when dating with children, and the rules are often different. But, you are perfectly capable of learning them, and deserve to share your life with a partner you desire.

When dating someone new, remember to take things slower than you might have before your children. If you are interested in developing a sustainable relationship, get to know the man slowly and independently from your children first. Make sure you have spent a lot of time with him before inviting him into your home, especially as an overnight guest. Only do it if the kids are sleeping somewhere else. He should know from the beginning that your children will come first. Try and date new people that friends, family, teachers or coworkers can vouch for. If those resources have been exhausted, you have many options. Try a class, support group, religiously affiliated meeting, party, event, exercise class, book club, singles cruise, lecture, or sporting event. Meanwhile, do yourself a favor and make an online profile. There are an infinite number of dating websites to choose from. Have a single friend help you and get out there. While cruising the internet, make sure to have a very strict screening process before even talking to someone on the phone. There are great guys out there and you will find them with patience and consistency. Make a reasonable list of standards for your dates and do not break them no matter what.

Although it can be tempting to talk about your dates with your younger children, it is really important to have a strong support system of adults or a good therapist to share this information with instead. You have a right to a private life and it can be confusing or frightening for children to see their parents dating different strangers. Tell them you are going out with a friend at this stage of the game. After a more committed relationship has been established, you can introduce the new man slowly to your children with short, fun, activities.

Finally, here are a list of 6 great dating spots throughout the L.A. area for single moms getting back into the scene.:

- 1) Le Dome 9720 Sunset Blvd. (La Cienega Blvd.), West Hollywood, (310) 659-6919
- 2) Marmalade 14910 Ventura Blvd. (Kester Ave.), Sherman Oaks, (818) 905-8872
- 3) Geoffrey's 27400 PCH (Malibu Cyn. Rd.), Malibu, (310) 457-1519
- 4) The Bel-Air Hotel 701 Stone Canyon Rd. (Sunset Blvd.), Bel-Air, (310) 472-1211
- 5) Sona 401 La Cienega Blvd. (Beverly Blvd.), West Hollywood, (310) 659-7708
- 6) Primitivo Wine Bistro 1025 Abbot Kinney Blvd. (Main St.), Venice (310) 396-5353

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