

The Jewish Week

SERVING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GREATER NEW YORK



Learn Hebrew Online
With Israel's best teachers [Click for a trial lesson](#)

SEARCH	ABOUT US	SUBSCRIBE	DIRECTORIES	ADVERTISE	CONTACT US	SHOP	JEWISH VACATIONS
--------	----------	-----------	-------------	-----------	------------	------	------------------

HOME
NY RESOURCES
NEWS EDITORIAL EDITOR'S COLUMN OPINION LETTERS
CLASSIFIEDS
ADVICE ARTS & CULTURE BOOKS CALENDARS HEALTH FOOD LIFECYCLES NEIGHBORHOODS NEWSLETTER SABBATH WEEK SINGLES TRAVEL
JEWISH VACATIONS
FRESH INK FOR TEENS
WRITE ON FOR ISRAEL
SPECIAL SECTIONS
DIRECTORIES
MANHATTAN BROOKLYN/STATEN ISLAND QUEENS LONG ISLAND WESTCHESTER/BRONX
View Last Week's Issue
Jewish Week Wireless
DEVELOPED BY SALEMGLOBAL INTERNET

Wednesday, January 31, 107 / 20 Shevat 3867
[RECENT STORIES](#)

Singles column

(01/26/2007)

Single Jewish Mom Seeking

Esther D. Kustanowitz - Staff Writer

Being single is hard enough. Unless you have roommates, you have to remember to buy your own toilet paper, pay your own bills — and bulk shopping isn't worth it. Then there's the actual dating, with the regular mix of self-doubt and nervous preparation, the wondering about word choices and phone calls and what any and all of it means. You have to filter out your own opinions from those of your friends and family. You ponder the purported existence of chemistry and assess long-term partnership potential.



But for single mothers, there's another layer of just about everything. Single mothers already have life partners in their children — if beyond their progeny, they place themselves as priorities, any significant other will be ranked at No. 3 before he sends his first JDate e-mail. And if you get along with someone, but your kid doesn't? It can mean bye-bye, Mr. Nice Guy.

"It's not easy crossing over from Mom to Single Mom Seeking," says Rachel Sarah, who is in her early 30s. "A mother is nurturing, soft and sometimes frumpy. A mother doesn't wear tight skirts and black boots. She doesn't flirt with random men while grocery shopping. She most emphatically does not own a first-date skirt."

A bit sassier than your average mom, with stories that are alternately hilarious and intimately candid, Sarah, in New York promoting "Single Mom Seeking: Playdates, Blind Dates and Other Dispatches from the Dating World" (Seal Press, 2007), emphatically does own that first-date skirt, and thinks it's one of two things that every single woman should have. The second thing is what she describes as a "tribe."

"It sounds like a Jewish word," she admits, explaining that she means "a clan of good friends, good people you can call after a good or a bad date. They serve as honest bogus detectors and help identify the red flags" that she often encounters and sometimes, as mom and non-mom daters alike often do, ignores.

In "Single Mom Seeking," Sarah shares her experiences — the good, the bad and the provocative — as a single mom whose bipolar boyfriend walked out on her and their baby girl in 2000. Sarah was bewildered. Did she start dating? How would that affect her daughter? How should she tell dates about her daughter? The process was overwhelming, as she tried to balance her emotional needs with her role as mother of a child whose life was complicated enough without trying to figure out who Mommy's "special friends" were.

Sarah decided on a major move — from New York City to Berkeley, Calif., closer to where she grew up, and where a single-parent family is one of a variety of relationship and parenting options. She began dating — through setups and, on a dare, posting profiles online. "I've learned that men don't read dating profiles," she says. "They're browsing photos," most of which, she adds, are not accurate. Throughout, her "tribe" advised her as she walked the fine line

DONATE NOW
 **AFMDA**

AT THE
LE MERIDIEN
DEAD SEA 

Subscribe to

The New Republic
starting at
\$9.97!

Subscribe to
The New Republic
Starting at \$9.97!

Featured Jobs
powered by
JewishCareers.com
[More Local Jobs Post](#)
[Jobs Post Your Resume](#)
[Search Jobs](#)

between being too conservative and being too bold. "I had to learn to ask questions and not reveal everything," she says, admitting regrets over some early dating choices. "Being clear about my deal-breakers was something I had to figure out." And over the course of an estimated 100 dates in five years, she did.

In 2003 Sarah began writing "Single Mom Seeking," a column for Literary Mama magazine, an online publication for and by moms, which served as the foundation for the book. Sarah also began writing a column for JWeekly (the San Francisco-Bay Area Jewish newspaper) about her search for love, she hoped, with a single Jewish man who shared the same qualities as the "fun, gentle, warm Jewish fathers" she kept seeing at her daughter's preschool.

Early last year, a reader — codename Yenta — wrote in, suggesting that Sarah meet her husband's best friend. "I wouldn't actually call him 'nice,'" the would-be matchmaker admitted. "He's Israeli and he has a tough kibbutz exterior." But, she continued, "I know for sure that whomever he ends up with will be blessed, adored, and cared for." It would have surprised no one if Sarah had treated that comment like the red flag it sounds like. But there was a phone conversation, a good feeling and a first date. Sarah discovered that in addition to the promised sabra's exterior, her date possessed a soft heart that developed a love for her and for her daughter.

Without ruining the end of the book, I can tell you that Sarah's daughter remains her central concern and inspiration: "Single Mom Seeking" is dedicated to her, "my true love, who has shown me in her own way not to settle." n

Esther D. Kustanowitz wishes that bulk shopping — or even FreshDirect —were worthwhile for singles. You can e-mail her at jdatersanonymous@gmail.com.

Esther D. Kustanowitz writes The First Person Singular column, which appears every other week. She can be reached at jdatersanonymous@hotmail.com

[Back to top](#)



Well read Jewish Singles ♡
JWRomanceOnline
Join FREE Wink FREE Reply to Messages FREE

2000 - 2007 The Jewish Week, Inc. All rights reserved. Please refer to the [legal notice](#) for other important information.