

Do Not Marry Yourself



By Terri Trespicio for GalTime.com

3 strategies for single people who want to get married

There once was a woman from Fargo who married herself. It's true. She's not the only one, either. But let's stick with Nadine, who was featured on the Anderson Cooper daytime show—and as an outspoken proponent of single living, I was asked to be on the segment to weigh in on the whole thing.

In brief, I think the woman did a cute, quirky thing that I'm sure she knew would get a lot of attention (I don't buy the "who, me?" approach she takes). Ok, that's the end of the brief part.

what does this do, really?

If you ask me, she's actually *undermining* the single movement. When you get married, you're not single anymore. Nadine has effectively removed herself from the dating pool, since she's married to herself. She's opting *out* of being single. She doesn't get the benefits of either being married or single. Plus, she's buying into the idea that you need to be married to be complete. And you don't.

(And, if you are married to yourself AND dating whomever you like, as Nadine seems to imply, is your marriage one of convenience, until someone better than, well, you comes along?)

Look: I like the sentiment here. She decided to stop waiting around for some ideal mate and embrace her life and herself, and stand on her own. OK, fine. But: Please don't tell me we now all need to have a ceremony to do this. Please. I thought one of the great hidden benefits of being single was NOT having to spend thousands of dollars on a single day's event.

full disclosure.

Fact is, I actually *had* a dream myself years ago that I was getting married: I was in white dress, carrying red roses (reminiscent of my private all-girls' catholic high school graduation where grads take to the aisle in a white dress, something that always raised some flags for me). And in the dream, there was no man, nor was I waiting for one—and that was just fine with me. I call this *metaphor*. I call this A DREAM. I didn't run out and start printing invites.

what about the real single issues?

Now, let's get one thing straight: Nadine isn't marching on Washington to make her marriage legal—it was a ceremony, not a civil rights statement. I'm guessing, anyway, from the footage we see in the segment in which she kisses herself in the mirror, takes herself out for Indian food, and then home for a candlelit bath (all great things, though I don't call that a

date. I call it living).

I wish the segment showed less of Nadine talking to herself in her rearview mirror, and more expert insight, from someone like Bella DePaulo, PhD, about the reality that singles face in our culture—and not having a wedding day is the LEAST of it (a cogent argument she makes in her must-read book “Singled Out”).

All in all, I think Nadine took an empowering and timely sentiment, and put clown makeup on it. My fear is that what could be seen as a brave, symbolic step in theory ends up sheer spectacle in practice.

And you now, it's too bad—because more and more people are realizing that there are many ways to live a life well outside the confines of traditional institutions (like, ahem, marriage). So, then, why take a fresh, inspiring message and cloak it in *exactly* that?

my 3 strategies for single peeps

If you happen to be single and needing some support, here's some advice I offered on the show. (*Also featured on the Anderson site complete with pics of sad looking ladies*)

Stop singing the same tired song. You know the song: “There's no good men out there”, “I'll never find anyone,” “I'm a failure because I don't have a partner.” What story do you keep telling people and why? I guarantee it's getting you nowhere fast. Focus on what you want now, not what happened in the past.

Tell family and friends to back down. Make it clear to them that you love them and appreciate their support, *but your life is not a problem to be fixed*. You have to lay down the law. And realize that if you're making choices for other people, you're not living your life. You're living theirs.

Redefine single: Broaden your perspective. As a single person, you have the ultimate and enviable freedom of connecting with whomever you want! It doesn't mean being a hermit. Figure out what it is you really want-and stop using fear as an excuse to not pursue meaningful connections with other people.

...And talk to someone. Such as a relationship and dating coach like me.