

My Love Relationship with Celebrities and Fame



By Royal Young of *Interview Magazine*

Charlie Sheen's recent escort escapades are good for a raunchy laugh, but they are part of a trend in bad celebrity behavior that has poisoned my own ideas about passion. I have always chased fame – which never seemed to match up with love – despite the fact that my devoted parents have been together for almost 30 years. While I'm sure there are plenty of Hollywood homebodies with happy marriages, we are constantly bombarded with the burning Bentley car wreck of celebrity relationships.

Growing up as a reserved Jewish boy already predisposed to

solitude who would only come alive when performing, I decided I would never need to use my heart. Spotlights were flirtatious, and applause was better than the attention I couldn't get from pretty girls my own age. I turned into a hungry ghost, too self-obsessed to want anything but vague, vacuous fame – at any cost.

I was raised on the Lower East Side in the '90s (before its multi-million dollar reincarnation) and went to LaGuardia "Fame" High School. I chased gaudy glamour after graduation and skipped college for empty extra roles in music videos, sleazy modeling gigs, sex exchanged for money and promises of lines in movies that were never made – all which led to failed, fledgling relationships. I wore outlandish, revealing outfits for attention, and was thrilled when shutterbugs snapped my portrait for a street style section picked up by Gawker, where, to my glee, I received so much hate mail. Yet without any long-term girlfriend – since I pushed away every person who tried to get close to me – I felt empty.

At 24, I realized I hadn't been in a normal relationship for ten years. Sure, I've hooked up with models and had two seconds of screen time in some indie movies, Boy George once winked at me and I've partied with Yoko Ono, but I suddenly craved the comfort of a real lover. For the first time in my life, I wanted the stability and support my parents seemed to have, working through their issues as a loving team. But I had no idea where to start. I no longer wanted to be a fame shark, get featured on Perez Hilton, or go dancing with the stars. I knew none of that would make me feel like I had a home or a heart, or allow me to be satisfied with who I was: a shy loner who longed to fit in with a loud, lascivious crowd. When it came to love, I realized there were no rules except for letting go; I just wish there were some tabloids that could teach me how.

Royal Young just completed his debut memoir *Fame Shark*. He works with *Interview Magazine* (www.interviewmagazine.com) and

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